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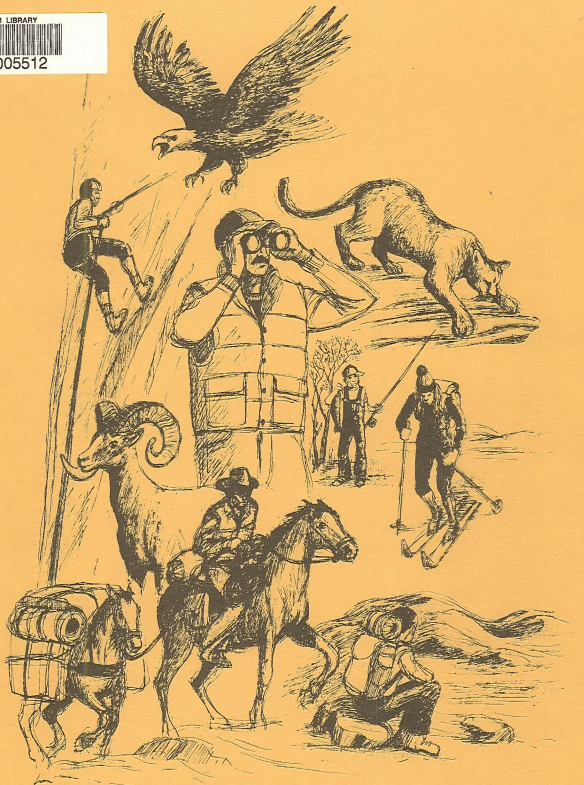

NEW MEXICO WILDERNESS STUDY AREA DECISIONS

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR • BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT • NEW MEXICO STATE OFFICE, NOVEMBER, 1980

IN REPLY REFER TO

8500

United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
NEW MEXICO STATE OFFICE
P.O. BOX 1449
SANTA FE, NEW MEXICO 87501

Dear Citizen:

This book explains my decisions derived from the Intensive Wilderness Inventory in New Mexico. These decisions mark the end of more than 2 years of wilderness inventories on the public lands. As a result of this inventory, public lands with wilderness characteristics are now identified. These lands are called Wilderness Study Areas (WSA's) because they will be studied for possible wilderness designation by Congress. Wilderness will be studied, along with other potential land uses, through the BLM's regular land use planning system.

During the wilderness inventory, we have conducted a substantial public involvement program in which many of you have participated. In fact, public involvement has been a significant part of our wilderness inventory. This is especially desirable during the wilderness inventory which required coverage of vast acreages and frequent subjective judgments. We believe decisions presented here show that public comments were used.

As with most significant land management decisions, some people will disagree with the results of the inventory presented here. For those of you in this situation, I would like to draw your attention to the portion of this book entitled "Protests and Appeals." The decisions in this book will become effective 30 days after they are announced. This means that all areas subjected to intensive inventory are protected from wilderness-impairing activities until the 30 days expire. At that time, only WSA's and those areas remaining under protest will be potected from wilderness-impairing activities.

I want to extend my sincere thanks to all of you who have participated in our wilderness inventory. We are fully aware that many people sacrificed considerable personal time and expense to help us in this important evaluation. We hope you will continue to be involved in wilderness study decisions during the next few years.

As a final note, if you have any questions on the wilderness review in New Mexico, please call or write me or any one of our districts. Addresses and phone numbers may be found in the appendix.

Sincerely yours,

Larry L. Woodard

Larry L. Woodard, Acting
State Director

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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

NEW MEXICO STATE OFFICE

WILDERNESS STUDY AREA DECISIONS

NOVEMBER 1980

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part 1

WILDERNESS REVIEW IN NEW MEXICO

INTRODUCTION

In this book, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) in New Mexico presents decisions concerning those public lands which contain wilderness characteristics and, therefore, are to be studied for possible wilderness designation. It also states that certain lands lack wilderness characteristics and are now dropped from further wilderness consideration. More detailed maps and information concerning these lands are available from BLM offices upon request. BLM's Wilderness Review Process is mandated by Section 603 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA) of 1976.

The "Wilderness Inventory Handbook," which explains the policy, direction, procedures and guidelines for conducting the wilderness inventory of the public lands, was published on September 17, 1978 by the Bureau of Land Management. A second book, "Interim Management Policy and Guidelines for Lands Under Wilderness Review," which explains what activities may continue in wilderness inventory units and those activities which may be restricted, was published by the BLM on December 12, 1979. These books are available at all BLM offices in the state.

OVERVIEW OF BLM's WILDERNESS REVIEW PROCESS

The BLM's Wilderness Review Process will be completed in three phases as directed by Congress in Section 603 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA). These are: Inventory, Study and Reporting. The inventory phase has two parts, initial and intensive. This Wilderness Review Process is described as follows:

Phase 1 - INVENTORY: This was a two-step process which was designed to identify those areas of the public lands containing specific wilderness characteristics under criteria established by Congress. Such areas are identified as Wilderness Study Areas (WSA's).

(a) INITIAL INVENTORY: At this stage, those areas of the public lands, which clearly and obviously did not have wilderness characteristics, were identified. Information gained from public comments and existing documents were used in making this decision. (The Initial Inventory Decision Book was published on July 9, 1979 and is available at all BLM offices within the State.)

Those areas found not to contain wilderness characteristics were no longer considered for further inventory, and management restrictions of Section 603(c) of FLPMA no longer apply. The remaining lands continued into the next step: Intensive Inventory.

(b) INTENSIVE INVENTORY: Intensive field surveys were conducted on 2.2 million acres of New Mexico public lands. (This book displays the results of this effort.) Those lands judged to contain wilderness characteristics have been identified as Wilderness Study Areas (WSA's). This means they will be studied to determine their suitability or nonsuitability for wilderness designations.

On lands identified as WSA's, management restrictions imposed by Section 603(c) of FLPMA will continue to apply until a final determination or selection as wilderness is made by Congress. Those areas which do not have the required wilderness characteristics have been removed from further inventory and wilderness-related management restrictions are lifted as of December 15, 1980.

Phase 2 - STUDY: Those lands identified as WSA's will be studied through the BLM land-use planning system. When this occurs, all possible uses of WSA's (e.g., intensive grazing, wildlife habitat, mineral development and wilderness) will be evaluated to determine the highest and best use of the area.

The result of the study phase will be a recommendation by the BLM for each WSA as to whether the area is suitable or nonsuitable for designation as "Wilderness." Management restrictions imposed by Section 603(c) of FLPMA will still apply to all areas recommended as suitable or nonsuitable, as only Congress can make the final wilderness suitability decisions.

Phase 3 - REPORTING: Wilderness study recommendations concerning suitability will be submitted through the Secretary of the Interior and the President to Congress. Mineral survey reports, environmental impact statements and other data are submitted with these recommendations. All reports must be submitted to the President no later than October 21, 1991. Only Congress can designate an area as part of the National Wilderness Preservation System.

CURRENT STATUS OF THE REVIEW PROCESS

Statewide Inventory

This book presents the decisions from the "intensive" step of the wilderness inventory process. The purpose of the "Intensive Inventory" was to identify public land areas with wilderness

characteristics and designate them as Wilderness Study Areas. Lands which are identified as lacking wilderness characteristics are being dropped from further wilderness consideration. Maps and detailed descriptions of all units which underwent intensive inventory begin in Part II of this book.

Table I traces the New Mexico Wilderness Program from its beginnings and summarizes its present status. Table II summarizes the decisions for those public lands subjected to the Intensive Inventory process.

SUMMARY TABLE I

WILDERNESS REVIEW PROCESS TO DATE*

Category	Total Statewide		DISTRICT							
			Albuquerque		Socorro		Las Cruces		Roswell	
	Units	Acres	Units	Acres	Units	Acres	Units	Acres	Units	Acres
Category I: (Sept. 1978) Total public lands inventoried.	346	12,846,966	57	2,604,702	68	1,884,328	158	4,901,353	63	3,496,583
Category II: (July 1979)** Inventory lands not recommended for intensive inventory.	238	10,459,459	35	2,377,353	39	1,230,455	113	3,399,594	51	3,452,057
Category III: (July 1979) All lands subject to an intensive inventory.	108	2,387,507	22	227,349	29	613,873	45	1,501,759	12	44,526
Category IV: ***Wilderness Study Areas identified after accelerated studies.	3	28,520	3	28,520						
Category V: **Units dropped from further wilderness consideration after accelerated studies.	2	26,242	1	16,642	1	9,600				
Category VI: ***Instant Study Areas	3	119,506			1	115,000	1	4,146	1	360

*This Table is a summary of final decisions within the wilderness review process prior to November 15, 1980.
**These lands are no longer subject to interim management policy.
***These lands are subject to interim management policy until a final decisions concerning their disposal.

SUMMARY TABLE II

INTENSIVE INVENTORY DECISIONS*

Category	Total Statewide		DISTRICT							
			Albuquerque		Socorro		Las Cruces		Roswell	
	Units	Acres	Units	Acres	Units	Acres	Units	Acres	Units	Acres
Category I: (July 1979)** Public lands subject to intensive inventory.	100	***2,213,239	18	182,187	27	489,273	44	1,497,613	11	44,166
Catgory I-A: Public lands subject to intensive inventory after district boundary changes.	100	2,213,239	18	182,187	27	499,593	42	1,442,538	13	88,921
Category II: Public lands designated as wilderness study areas.	66	875,893	10	110,957	16	325,262	18	410,163	4	29,511
Category III. Public lands deleted from the wilderness review process.	48	1,328,156	11	71,230	9	169,971	23	1,032,375	5	54,580
Category IV: Decision deferred until further notice.	10	9,190	0	0	3	4,360	0	0	5	4,830

*The decisions summarized on these tables are subject to change pending any protests or appeals of the State Director's final decision. Interim management regulations will apply to all lands delted from the Wilderness Review Process until December 15, 1980 unless a protest or appeal is filed.

**Due to changes in district boundaries, multiple units being combined into single units and single units and single units being split into multiple units, Categories II-IV will not add up to equal Category I totals.

***Total does not include ISA's (119,506 acres) and Accelerated Study Areas (54,762 acres).

Instant Study Areas

Section 603 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act requires the BLM to make accelerated recommendations as to the suitability or nonsuitability of certain areas of the public lands for designation as wilderness. Section 603(c) of FLPMA mandates that the BLM submit a wilderness suitability report by July 1, 1980 on all primitive and natural areas which were designated as such prior to November 1, 1975. These areas were not identified through the BLM inventory process. They were declared Wilderness Study Areas by an act of Congress. Therefore, the BLM has described them as wilderness "Instant Study Areas," or ISA's.

Each ISA must be reported as either suitable for inclusion in the National Wilderness Preservation System or as nonsuitable. BLM must still determine, subject to public review, if each ISA actually has those wilderness characteristics defined in Section 2(c) of the Wilderness Act. ISA's which do not have the necessary wilderness characteristics will be recommended as nonsuitable. However, if an ISA does have wilderness characteristics, then a detailed study (including an environmental statement) will be completed. Based on the findings of this study, the environmental statement and public review, recommendations will be made to the President as to the suitability or nonsuitability of the area in question. Wilderness-related management restrictions which are required by law will apply to all ISA's until a decision has been made by Congress.

There are three ISA's in New Mexico: El Malpais, Guadalupe Canyon and Mathers Natural Areas. These areas are currently being studied. The proposed wilderness study recommendations for these areas are briefly described in the following sections:

1. EL MALPAIS NATURAL AREA - Socorro District

Acreage:

Instant Wilderness Study Area	84,000
BLM Contiguous Roadless Lands	31,000
Total	115,000

Description: Situated southeast of Grants and south of State Highway 53, this unit contains some of the youngest topographic features in the United States. It possesses a wide variety of wildlife and several different and unique successions of plants. It has received constant public and scientific interest and study over several decades. The rugged and remote topography and landscape offer outstanding opportunities for solitude and for geological, ecological and cultural research.

Status: One hundred thousand acres of the ISA is proposed as suitable for wilderness designation. This proposed recommendation will be finalized upon completion of the Wilderness Study and Environmental Impact Statement, which will more clearly identify conflicts with wilderness designation.

2. GUADALUPE CANYON NATURAL AREA - Las Cruces District

Acreage:

Instant Wilderness Study Area	3,692
BLM New Mexico Contiguous Lands	454
Contiguous WSA in Arizona	4,814
Forest Service RARE II Contiguous Lands ..	15,850
Total ..	24,810

Description: This area is located in the extreme southwest corner of New Mexico and is contiguous both with a Wilderness Study Area administered by the Bureau of Land Management in Arizona and to a Forest Service RARE II area (Bunk Robinson Peak #3200) which has been recommended for further planning.

The area's principle feature is a long, narrow canyon which extends into Mexico. Striking scenic values, together with unique species of flora and fauna, are enclosed within the high walls of the Guadalupe Canyon Natural Area.

Status: The Las Cruces District has conducted an intensive inventory on the ISA and concluded the area by itself does not meet wilderness criteria. However, when evaluated with contiguous federal lands, it may meet wilderness criteria and may be suitable for designation as wilderness by Congress. Therefore, the recommendation on suitability of the ISA depends upon the results of a joint study of the entire roadless area by both federal agencies.

The Safford District has conducted an accelerated inventory on its contiguous non-ISA lands (Baker Canyon) and designated them as a Wilderness Study Area.

At present, joint study efforts are being conducted by BLM (Las Cruces and Safford Districts) and the Forest Service (Coronado National Forest) as a part of the Coronado National Forest land-use planning process. Recommendations regarding the future management for Bunk Robinson Peak and Whitmire Canyon will be displayed in a draft environmental impact statement (DEIS). The DEIS will contain various management alternatives for the entire Coronado National Forest and is tentatively scheduled for public review in early 1981. After review, a final management alternative will be selected and displayed in the final EIS, which will be the basis for the Coronado National Forest Land-Use Management Plan. Review and finalization of the EIS will produce a suitability recommendation which will be forwarded to appropriate departments (Agriculture and Interior), the President and finally to Congress for review and decision.

This will resolve the suitability question for both agencies, although it will not clarify how the area will be managed. BLM will resolve management alternatives through their respective Resource Management Plans scheduled for this area. In the interim, both agencies are coordinating management actions under appropriate policy, guidelines, rules and regulations.

3. MATHERS NATURAL AREA - Roswell District

Acreage: Instant Wilderness Study Area 360
Contiguous BLM Roadless Lands 19,520*
Total .. 19,880

*These lands were identified as obviously lacking wilderness characteristics on July 9, 1979.

Description: The Mathers Natural Area is located in Chaves County, 40 miles east of Roswell, and is contiguous with two Bureau of Land Management roadless areas.

Mathers is a small flat grassland which has been excluded from grazing for many years. The Roswell District has conducted an intensive inventory on the ISA and concluded that it is not of sufficient size for wilderness designation and that opportunities for solitude or a primitive unconfined type of recreation are lacking. Contiguous federal lands in roadless areas NM-060-502 and 503 were formally determined not to have wilderness values and were excluded from further consideration during the statewide initial inventory process.

Status: This ISA is recommended as nonsuitable for wilderness designation, even with contiguous lands being considered. A report to the President, accompanied by a nonsuitable recommendation, was submitted to the Secretary of the Interior in August 1980.

Star Lake-Bisti Accelerated Inventory

The Star Lake-Bisti Coal Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) explains the impact of coal strip mining on certain lands in the San Juan Basin near Farmington, New Mexico. These lands contained several wilderness inventory units which were inventoried for wilderness characteristics in advance of the rest of the State. This was done to clarify which lands will conflict with potential coal operations at the earliest possible date so that planning could commence. The result of this inventory was identification of the following Wilderness Study Areas:

Bisti	NM-010-057	3,520 acres
Denazin	NM-010-004	19,000 acres
Ah-she-sle-pah	NM-010-009	6,000 acres

Interim Management

During the period of Wilderness Review, and until an area is officially dropped from further wilderness consideration, the BLM is mandated by Congress to manage potential wilderness lands so as not to impair their suitability for wilderness designation by Congress. This is referred to as "interim management." That is, management until a wilderness decision is made. Interim management is discussed in detail in a recently released document entitled Interim Management Policy and Guidelines for Lands Under Wilderness Review. This document is available at any BLM office.

It is important to remember that any lands deleted from the Wilderness Review Process, as a result of the intenstive inventory, will be managed according to the interim management policy until December 15, 1980. If a protest or appeal is filed for lands deleted from the review process, they will be subject to interim management guidelines until a final decision is published in the Federal Register.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

How Comments Were Made

From March 31 until July 21, 1980, public comments on the Wilderness Study Proposals were solicited in a variety of ways. Three thousand copies of New Mexico Wilderness Study Proposals were distributed throughout the State; the back cover of this document was a postage-paid comment sheet. Open houses, to explain the BLM's proposals, were held in eight selected locations throughout the State in early April. Public meetings, to solicit oral public comments, were also held in ten selected locations in May and June. Numerous personal contacts were made with individuals, special interest groups and State and local government officials. In addition, the BLM encouraged written comments as the primary input method.

Members of the public were reminded that comments should address the presence or absence of wilderness characteristics within a given roadless area. These characteristics, identified in Section 2(c) of the Wilderness Act of 1964, include size, naturalness, outstanding opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation and supplemental features such as unique geologic features, high scenic values, cultural sites, etc. Comments on resource conflicts will not be used until the wilderness study phase.

The BLM's effort resulted in the reception of about 700 personal letters, 700 form letters and 2,300 coupons. These coupons were attached to a poster which was distributed nationally by a special interest group. People were asked to remove the coupon, which had a standard printed message, sign it and send it to the appropriate State Director.

How Public Comments Were Used

All public comments, written and oral, were analyzed by an inter-district team in the New Mexico State Office in Santa Fe. Oral comments were transcribed and analyzed with the written input. The analysis did not involve "vote counting." Comments were analyzed for the information they contained relevant to wilderness characteristics of specific units. Large numbers of form letters or petitions which merely supported or opposed wilderness study status, without supporting reasons, were of little use. However, a single letter or testimony which offered new information on the wilderness characteristics of a particular unit could have resulted in a change in the final decision.

Information on other land uses or conflicts with wilderness are not to be considered until the study phase of the Wilderness Review Process. This type of information had no bearing on the identification of Wilderness Study Areas, but has been retained for future use.

Following the analysis, comments providing new information were field-checked to verify their accuracy. Once verified, this new information was incorporated into the permanent documentation filed of the appropriate unit before a final decision was made.

Public comments were used to help the decision maker determine whether or not an area had wilderness characteristics. The final wilderness study decision was based not on the comments themselves, but on whether or not an area had wilderness characteristics.

Appendix D contains a summary of the demographic data and general opinions concerning the Wilderness Review Process. These comments and a summary of the unit specific comments for each area are included in a more detailed public comment analysis report. This report is on file in the New Mexico State Office and copies may be obtained upon request.

PROTESTS AND APPEALS

Any party objecting to the State Director's final decision for a specific unit has until December 15, 1980 to file a protest. The protester should include his name and address, the name and number of the inventory units being protested and the reasons the decision is being protested. Supporting reasons should either provide new information which was not considered during the intensive inventory or cite instances where the decision maker disregarded BLM policy.

During this period, the State Director will consider any new information provided. On or before January 16, 1981, the State Director will notify protesters of his decision to either uphold, change or reverse his previous decision. This decision will also be published in the Federal Register.

Following the decision to either approve, amend or deny a protest, any parties who are adversely affected and believe the decision to be incorrect have an additional 30 days to file a Notice of Appeal with the State Director. Within 30 days of the filing of the Notice of Appeal, a complete statement citing the reasons for the appeal must be filed with the U.S. Department of the Interior, Office of the Secretary, Board of Land Appeals, 4015 Wilson Blvd., Arlington, Virginia 22203. Supporting reasons should cite errors in the decision process and instances where the decision maker failed to follow BLM policy. If these reasons were included with the Notice of Appeal to the State Director, no additional statement is necessary. A copy of the Notice of Appeal and any statement of reasons, written arguments or briefs must be served on the Associate Solicitor, Division of Energy and Resources, Office of the Solicitor, U.S. Department of the Interior, Washington, D.C. 20240, as well as the State Director within 15 days of the filing of any specific document. For more information concerning appeal procedures, see Title 43 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), Part 4 and as amended in 45 FR (Federal Register) 5713.

Parties who may be adversely affected by the State Director's final decision may appeal first and bypass the protest procedures. However, it may be more efficient to attempt to resolve points of contention through the State Director. Any decision which is protested or appealed will not be implemented and interim management guidelines will be in effect until all rights of appeal have been exhausted.

WHAT'S NEXT? - WILDERNESS STUDIES

Until this time, the Wilderness Review Process has been concerned with inventory, the identification of lands with wilderness characteristics. The next phase will involve wilderness studies. The study of wilderness values will be accomplished through the BLM's land-use planning system. When this occurs, all possible uses of WSA's (e.g., intensive grazing wildlife, mineral development and wilderness) will be evaluated to determine the highest and best use of the area. These studies will be done with a great deal of public input and cover a smaller number of units as opposed to the statewide inventories.

At the conclusion of each study, the BLM will file an environmental impact statement and offer a recommendation to the President for each WSA stating whether an area is suitable or nonsuitable for designation as "wilderness." For each area recommended as suitable, the U.S. Geological Survey and Bureau of Mines will conduct a mineral resources inventory to determine the mineral potential of the area. All recommendations, both suitable and nonsuitable, will be forwarded to the President and then to Congress, as only Congress can make the final wilderness decision.

part 2

WILDERNESS STUDY AREA DECISIONS

PART II INTRODUCTION

The following section displays the results of the intensive wilderness inventory in New Mexico. The summary inventory results of each unit are discussed with a map of the unit on the facing page. Some units are designated as Wilderness Study Areas (WSA's) and some are not. The following narratives are brief summaries of information available at the various district offices. Each district has a more detailed narrative (decision rationale) explaining the wilderness study decision and how it was reached in the permanent documentation file for each unit. Copies of these narratives are available at the various district offices.

The following summary narratives are grouped by District. Each narrative describes the unit, summarizes the wilderness characteristics, and displays the WSA decision. Narratives should be reviewed with inventory unit boundaries, as shown on the accompanying maps. Both the narrative and map for a given unit contain a unit number. All New Mexico wilderness inventory unit numbers begin with the prefix "NM." New Mexico BLM districts are identified as follows:

010 Albuquerque
020 Socorro
030 Las Cruces
060 Roswell

The last three inventory unit numbers refer to a specific inventory unit within each district.

When all these letters and numbers are combined, a specific unit may be identified. For example, NM-030-065 is in the Las Cruces District (030) and is the Las Uvas Mountain Unit (065).

Due to a recent change in district boundaries, several inventory units are no longer being administered by the district which conducted the intensive inventory. Four units intensively inventoried by the Las Cruces District (Little Black Peak NM-030-109, Carrizozo Lava Flow NM-030-110A, Devil's Den Canyon NM-030-145 and McKittrick Canyon NM-030-146) are now administered by Roswell District. Two units intensively inventoried by the Roswell District (Texas Hill NM-060-810A/B) are now administered by the Las Cruces District. The narratives for these units are located under the district now responsible for their administration.

INTERAGENCY WILDERNESS REVIEWS

During the wilderness inventory, the BLM identified roadless areas of any size that were adjacent to roadless areas of another federal agency with authority to study wilderness. BLM then met with the agency involved to determine if they wished to conduct a cooperative wilderness study on the single roadless area.

In New Mexico, the BLM has roadless lands adjacent to roadless lands administered by the Fish and Wildlife Service, National Park Service and U. S. Forest Service.

Fish and Wildlife Service

The Little Yucca roadless area, NM-020-053, lies along the eastern boundary of the Little San Pascual Wilderness, located in the Bosque del Apache National Wildlife Refuge. (See page .) This unit has been dropped from further wilderness consideration.

U. S. Forest Service

The U. S. Forest Service has recently completed its second Roadless Area Review and Evaluation (RARE II) in New Mexico. The result of this effort was that each National Forest roadless area was recommended for wilderness, nonwilderness or for further planning. The BLM identified public land. roadless areas of any size which were adjacent to U. S. Forest Service roadless areas recommended for wilderness or further planning. The BLM did not identify roadless areas of less than 5,000 acres which were adjacent to "nonwilderness" RARE II recommendations. The BLM also identified situations where the BLM had a roadless area greater than 5,000 acres adjacent to a small (less than 5,000 acres) Forest Service roadless area.

The following are lists of situations where BLM roadless areas are adjacent to National Forest roadless areas.

BLM Wilderness Study Areas greater than 5,000 acres which are adjacent to the National Forests:

Navajo Peak NM-010-059 — 7,750 acres
(See map and narrative page 2- .)

Devil's Backbone NM-020-047A — 9,200 acres
(See map and narrative page 2- .)

Continental Divide NM-020-044 — 74,240 acres
(See map and narrative page 2- .)

BLM roadless areas adjacent to the National Forests which are less than 5,000 acres in size and were identified for possible study in conjunction with Forest Service lands:

NAME	NUMBER	SIZE	SEE PAGE
Manzano Contiguous	NM-010-092	845 acres	2-
Devil's Reach	NM-020-047B	800 acres	2-
Magdalena	NM-020-048A	3,640 acres	2-
	NM-020-048B	320 acres	2-
	NM-020-048C	400 acres	2-
Offspring	NM-020-065	3,600 acres	2-
Sacramento Escarpment	NM-030-104B	2,500 acres	2-
Bug Scuffle Canyon	NM-030-165	1,830 acres	2-
Little Dog Canyon	NM-030-114	4,787 acres	2-
Pup Canyon	NM-030-115	1,920 acres	2-
Rim	NM-030-124	3,583 acres	2-
Devil's Den Canyon	NM-060-145	320 acres	2-
McKittrick Canyon	NM-060-146	120 acres	2-
Lonesome Ridge	NM-060-801	2,443 acres	2-

National Park Service

CARLSBAD CAVERNS NATIONAL PARK - There are five small BLM roadless areas adjacent to the northern boundary of Carlsbad Caverns National Park (CCNP). All five units are in the Roswell District.

NAME	NUMBER	SIZE	SEE PAGE
Jurnigan	NM-060-802	4,800 acres	2-
Lechuguilla Canyon	NM-060-803	1,167 acres	2-
Mudgetts	NM-060-819/819A	2,941 acres	2-
Fawn Valley	NM-060-820	700 acres	2-

GUADALUPE MOUNTAINS NATIONAL PARK - There is one BLM Wilderness Study Area which lies against the northern boundary of the designated wilderness in the Guadalupe Mountains National Park. This unit is the Brokeoff Mountains NM-030-112. Wilderness study for the Brokeoff Mountains will consider the adjacent designated wilderness and National Park Service personnel will be consulted. Any future management of the Brokeoff Mountains will be coordinated with Guadalupe Mountains National Park. For the WSA decision and map on the Brokeoff Mountains, see page 2- .

ALBUQUERQUE DISTRICT

L. Paul Applegate, District Manager

San Ysidro NM-010-012/013 Unit Acreage: 9,250

Unit Description

San Ysidro is located approximately 12 air miles west of Cuba, New Mexico in Sandoval County. This inventory unit contains broken mesas, moderately sloped hills and portions of the San Ysidro Valley. NM-010-012/013 is vegetated with short grasses and sagebrush in its southern valley portions and in scattered pastures throughout the remaining area. It also contains numerous stands of mixed ponderosa pine and pinyon-juniper. The Continental Divide crosses the northern 1/4 of the unit.

Wilderness Characteristics

SIZE: San Ysidro has been found to contain 9,250 acres of public land and a 120-acre private inholding.

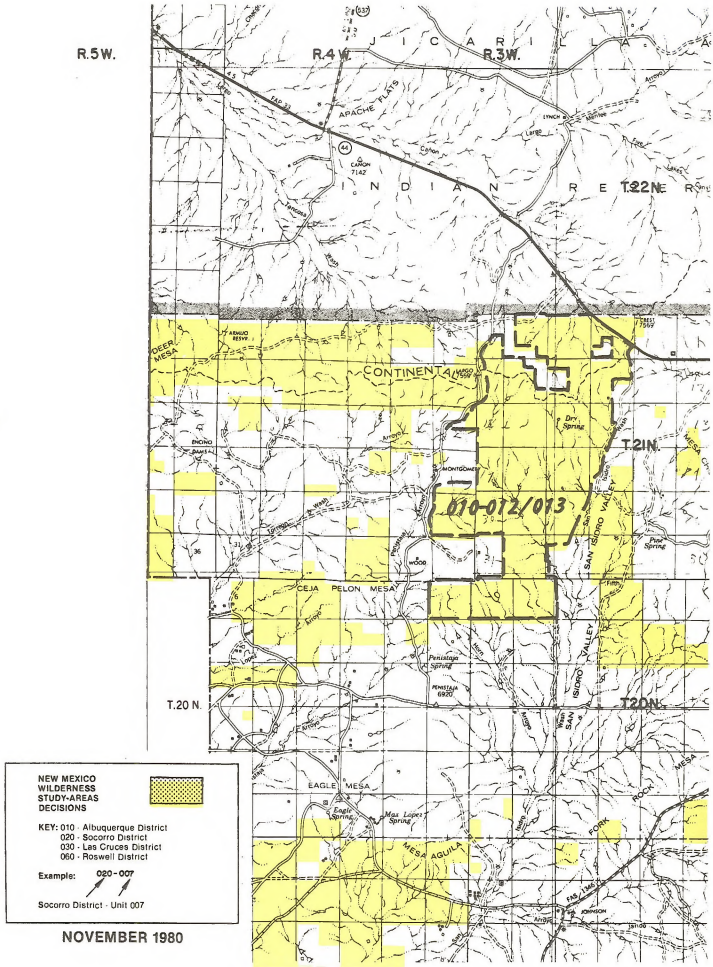
NATURALNESS: Intensive Inventory Unit, NM-010-012/013, San Ysidro has been heavily impacted by man-made features, the majority of which are range improvements, and by an existing network of vehicular ways and jeep trails. The unit contains six substantially noticeable man-made features and 31 additional features which were judged to be substantially unnoticeable. A network of 22 vehicular ways or jeep trails were found within the unit.

OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES: Inventory Unit NM-010-012/013 San Ysidro, provides an outstanding opportunity for solitude in its northern portions. The combination of the dense vegetative cover and the topography within this portion of the area provides outstanding opportunities for users to avoid the sights and sounds of others. San Ysidro does not offer an outstanding opportunity for primitive and unconfined recreation.

SUPPLEMENTAL VALUES: San Ysidro, NM-010-012/013 contains excellent scenic vistas along the Continental Divide and one abandoned homestead of possible historic value.

Final WSA Decision

Public input primarily supported the conclusion that San Ysidro Inventory Unit is not natural and therefore does not qualify as a WSA. After careful consideration, Inventory Unit NM-010-012/013 is dropped from further Wilderness consideration.


R.5W.
R.4W.
R.3W.
T.22N.
T.21N.
T.20 N.
T.20N.
JICARILLA
APACHE TUFA
INDIAN RES
CONTINENTAL
DEER MESA
CEJA PELON MESA
EAGLE MESA
MESA AGUILA
SAN GREGORIO VALLEY
010-072/073
NEW MEXICO
WILDERNESS
STUDY-AREAS
DECISIONS
KEY: 010 - Albuquerque District
020 - Socorro District
030 - Las Cruces District
060 - Roswell District
Example: 020-007
Socorro District - Unit 007
NOVEMBER 1980

Chijuilla NM-010-015 Unit Acreage: 10,600

Unit Description

Located approximately two miles west of Cuba, New Mexico, the area is bordered to the south by State Highway NM-197, by U.S. Forest Service land to the east, and by maintained roads to the west and north. Chijuilla consists of a broad, grassy plain with scattered pinyon-juniper stands bordered by high, broken mesas which are vegetated with sagebrush, pinyon-juniper and ponderosa pine.

Wilderness Characteristics

SIZE: This unit has been found to contain 10,600 acres of public land and 640 acres of private inholdings.

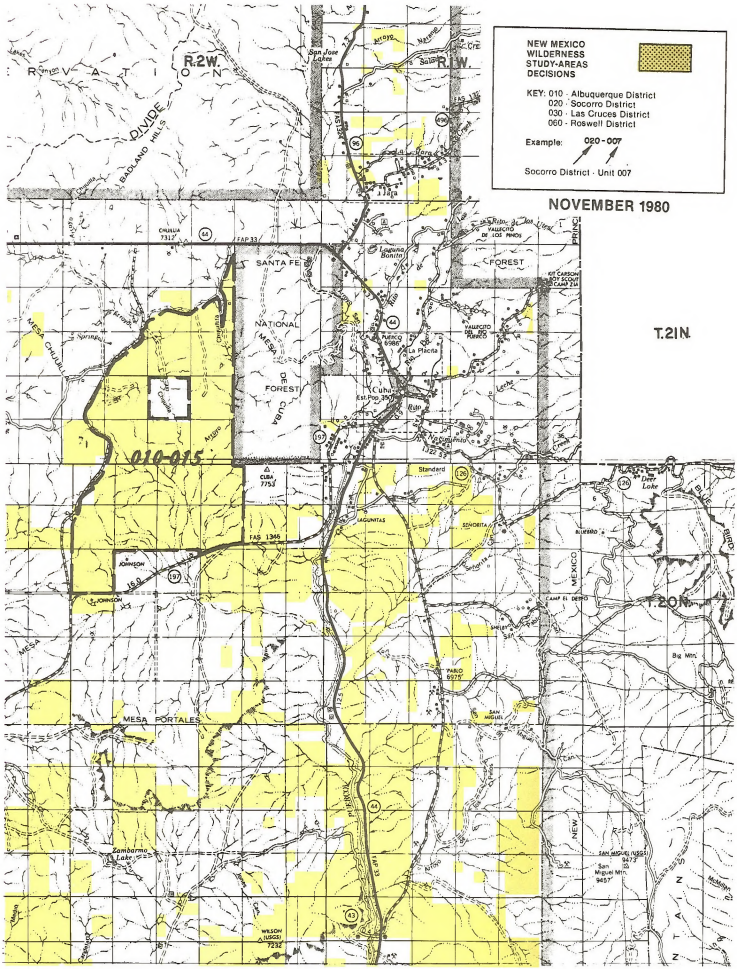
NATURALNESS: Inventory Unit NM-010-015 has been significantly altered by man-made features and impacts to the point that it no longer can be considered as natural in appearance. The area contains two maintained roads which serve as cherry stem boundary modifications, 28 ways or jeep trails, 35 retention dams or stock ponds, and 31 other man-made features which include old chainings, timber harvesting impacts, fencelines, a drill pad, metal watering troughs, and seismic shot holes.

OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES: Inventory Unit NM-010-015, Chijuilla, provides an outstanding opportunity for solitude. The combination of the dense vegetative cover and the topography within the northern portion of the area provide outstanding opportunities for users to avoid the sights and sounds of others. Chijuilla does not offer an outstanding opportunity for primitive and unconfined recreation.

SUPPLEMENTAL VALUES: Chijuilla inventory unit contains historical homestead ruins and excellent scenic vistas from the tip of Chijuilla Mesa-east.

Final WSA Decision

Chijuilla is not natural and therefore does not qualify for wilderness study. Public input primarily supported this decision. After careful consideration, Inventory Unit NM-010-015 is dropped from further Wilderness consideration.


NEW MEXICO
WILDERNESS
STUDY-AREAS
DECISIONS
KEY: 010 - Albuquerque District
020 - Socorro District
030 - Las Cruces District
060 - Roswell District
Example: 020-007
Socorro District - Unit 007
NOVEMBER 1980
R.2W.
R.1W.
T.21N.
T.20N.
010-015
DIVIDE
BADLAND HILLS
SANTA FE
NATIONAL
MESA
FOREST
MESA CHUJUILLA
MESA PORTALES
Cuba
Laguna Bonita
La Placita
Standard
Deer Lake
Zambarmo Lake
San Miguel Mtn.
Big Mtn.
FAS 1346
FAP 33
JOHNSON
LAGUNITAS
SEÑORITA
PABLO
SAN MIGUEL
NEW MEXICO

Ignacio Chavez NM-010-020 Unit Acreage: 34,120
WSA Acreage: 32,248

Unit Description

Located approximately six miles due west of the village of Guadalupe, N.M., this unit includes expansive mesa tops, steep hills and cliffs, and rolling foothills. Ignacio Chavez exhibits an excellent example of several abrupt environmental transition zones. Vegetation includes pinyon-juniper and ponderosa cover, scattered Douglas fir, prairie grasses, and cactus.

Wilderness Characteristics

SIZE: This unit has been found to contain 34,120 acres of public land. It is bounded on the west and east by maintained dirt roads and on the south by the Cibola National Forest. Due to a boundary change, which excluded 1,872 acres that lack naturalness, the recommended WSA acreage is 32,248.

NATURALNESS: The majority of the Ignacio Chavez Inventory Unit appears to be natural. The large size of the unit (32,248 acres) and its tremendous variation in vegetation and topography lend itself to the absorption of a larger variety of imprints of man (without affecting the naturalness) than a smaller, less varied unit. Based on this rationale, the cumulative impact of the intrusions comprised primarily of grazing improvements and 2-track vehicular ways, is not considered to have affected the apparent naturalness of the inventory unit.

A boundary adjustment deleting 1,872 acres was recommended based on the significant impact of a line camp.

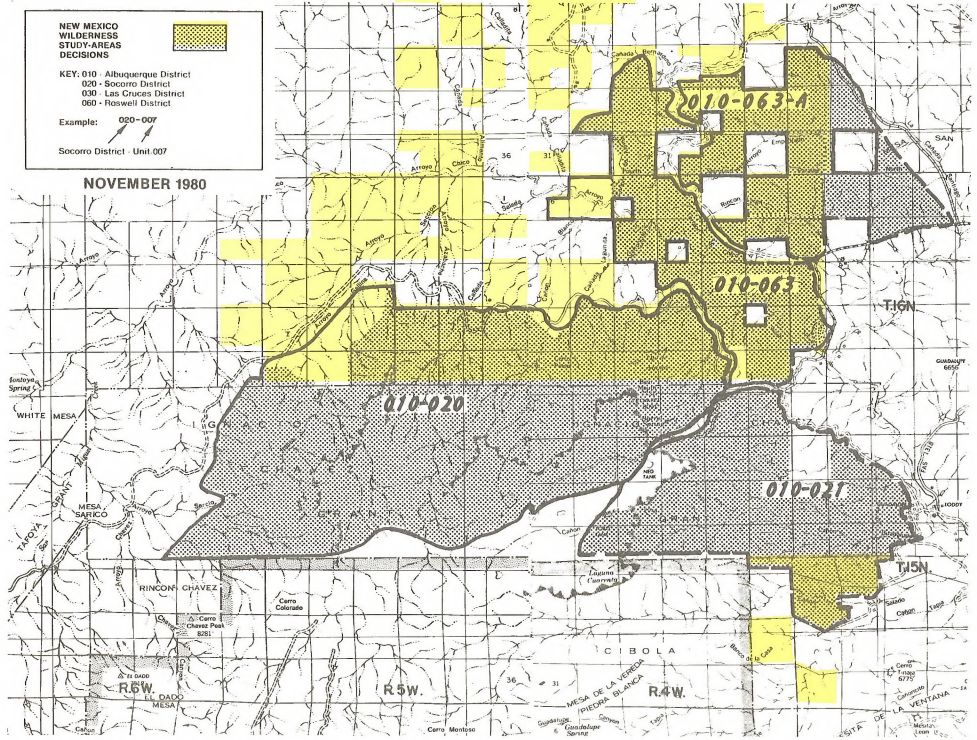
OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES: The large size, rugged terrain and abundant vegetation provide opportunity for solitude in essentially every portion of the unit. Mesa tops skirted by thick vegetation, rugged canyons and rolling foothills provide a more than adequate setting for the absorption of a large number of user groups.

Ignacio Chavez provides an outstanding opportunity for a variety of recreational pursuits, including backpacking, hunting, photography, sightseeing, and horseback riding.

SUPPLEMENTAL VALUES: The unit contains several significant cultural sites, as well as unique wildlife and scenic values.

Final WSA Decision

This unit contains wilderness characteristics and qualifies for wilderness study. Public input primarily supported this decision. However, several management issues were highlighted which, as mandated by the BLM's Wilderness handbook, cannot be considered until the study phase. At this time, these management concerns will have significant bearing on the final Wilderness decision. Therefore, after careful consideration, including public input, Ignacio Chavez is designated as a WSA.


NEW MEXICO
WILDERNESS
STUDY AREAS
DECISIONS
KEY: 010 - Albuquerque District
020 - Socorro District
030 - Las Cruces District
060 - Roswell District
Example: 020-007
Socorro District - Unit 007
NOVEMBER 1980
010-063-A
010-063
010-020
010-021
T.16N.
T.15N.
R.6W.
R.5W.
R.4W.
WHITE MESA
MESA SARICO
RINCON CHAVEZ
EL DADO MESA
CIBOLA
MESA DE LA VIEREDA
PIEDRA BLANCA
LA VENTANA
Cerro Colorado
Cerro Montoso
Cerro Trigo 6775'
Cerro Chavez Peak 8251
Arroyo Chico
Arroyo Seco
Rincon
Canon
Laguna Carnuel
Guadalupe Spring
Tonteyon Spring
Constelupe Spring
Mesita
Sta. Ana
Sta. Fe
Taos
Tapoya
Sarico
Hood
Ned Tank

Unit Description

Chamisa is located approximately 21 air miles southwest of San Ysidro and is contiguous with the village of Guadalupe. The inventory unit to the east consists of rolling foothills, cut by Guadalupe Canyon and Canon Chamisa as well as a variety of washes. As the unit progresses west, it climbs in elevation and culminates in a mesa top. Coinciding with the difference in elevation of 1,800 feet is a variety of vegetation. Shortgrass, bunchgrass, cacti, and shrubs intermingle, and give way to ponderosa pine and pinyon-juniper cover. Several springs are located within the inventory unit.

Wilderness Characteristics

SIZE: This unit has been found to contain 12,915 acres of public land. It is bounded on the north and east by a maintained road, on the south by the Cibola National Forest and on the west by a combination of a maintained road and the edge of the mesa top. That portion of the unit lacking naturalness (1,924 acres) is being excluded and the remaining 11,091 acres are recommended for Wilderness Study.

NATURALNESS: This unit generally appears natural. It contains primarily a few range developments; however, their cumulative impact is not substantially noticeable in the unit as a whole. The portions of the unit excluded by the boundary adjustments contain high density wood cutting and a water pipeline with a high concentration of affiliated range improvements.

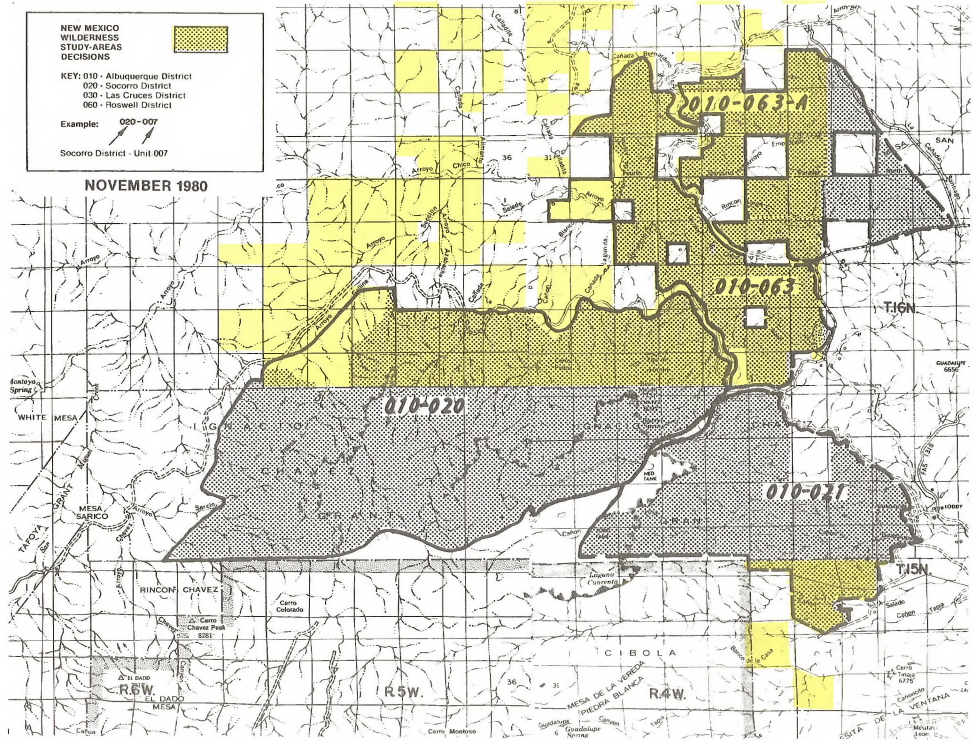
OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES: Inventory Unit NM-010-21 provides an outstanding opportunity for solitude. The variety of topography and vegetation inherent within the unit enhances this solitude factor significantly. Both Chamisa and Guadalupe Canyons, along with the rugged terrain which dominates the western portion of the unit, allow the avoidance of the sights and sounds of other user groups.

Chamisa provides an outstanding opportunity for hiking and sightseeing, again, stemming from the variety of terrain. The unit is especially scenic in the western half and presents exciting vistas as the unit climbs in elevation. Sightseeing related to cultural values exists within the Chamisa Unit.

SUPPLEMENTAL VALUES: The unit contains scenic values derived from the variety of topography, as well as cultural resources (both prehistoric and Spanish colonial).

Final WSA Decision

This unit contains wilderness characteristics and qualifies for wilderness study. Public input primarily supported this decision. However, several management issues were highlighted which, as mandated by the BLM's Wilderness handbook, cannot be considered until the study phase. At this time, these management concerns will have significant bearing on the final Wilderness decision. Therefore, after careful consideration, including public input, Chamisa is designated as a WSA.


NEW MEXICO
WILDERNESS
STUDY-AREAS
DECISIONS
KEY: 010 - Albuquerque District
020 - Socorro District
030 - Las Cruces District
060 - Roswell District
Example: 020-007
Socorro District - Unit 007
NOVEMBER 1980
010-063-A
010-063
010-020
010-021
T.16N.
T.15N.
R.6W.
R.5W.
R.4W.
WHITE MESA
MESA SARICO
RINCON CHAVEZ
Cerro Colorado
Cerro Chavez Peak
EL DADO MESA
CIBOLA
MESA DE LA VEREDA PIEDRA BLANCA
Cerro Montoso
Guadalupe Spring
Laguna Cuarenta
Montoya Spring
TAFOYA GRANT
IGNACIO CHAVEZ GRANT
SAN

Cabezon NM-010-022 Unit Acreage: 8,048
WSA Acreage: 7,235

Unit Description

Cabezon is located approximately 15 air miles due west of San Ysidro, N.M. The unit consists of a volcanic plug 8,000 feet high which is surrounded by rolling hills cut by a network of arroyos. Vegetation confines itself primarily to the rolling foothills, and consists of cacti, shrubs, grasses and some pinyon-juniper.

Wilderness Characteristics

SIZE: This unit has been found to contain approximately 8,048 acres. It is bounded on the north and south by a maintained road, on the west by property boundaries, and on the east by a combination of powerline right-of-way #NM 559354 and Road-4.

The powerline necessitated a boundary change to the east of Cabezon Inventory Unit. The boundary will proceed along the legal right-of-way, which will delete 813 acres based on a lack of naturalness.

NATURALNESS: The Cabezon Inventory unit appears to be natural. The cumulative impact of the existing intrusions is not considered to be significant enough to impair the apparent naturalness of the inventory unit. The rolling foothills surrounding Cabezon Peak are adequate topographic screening, making the cumulative impacts of four retention dams negligible.

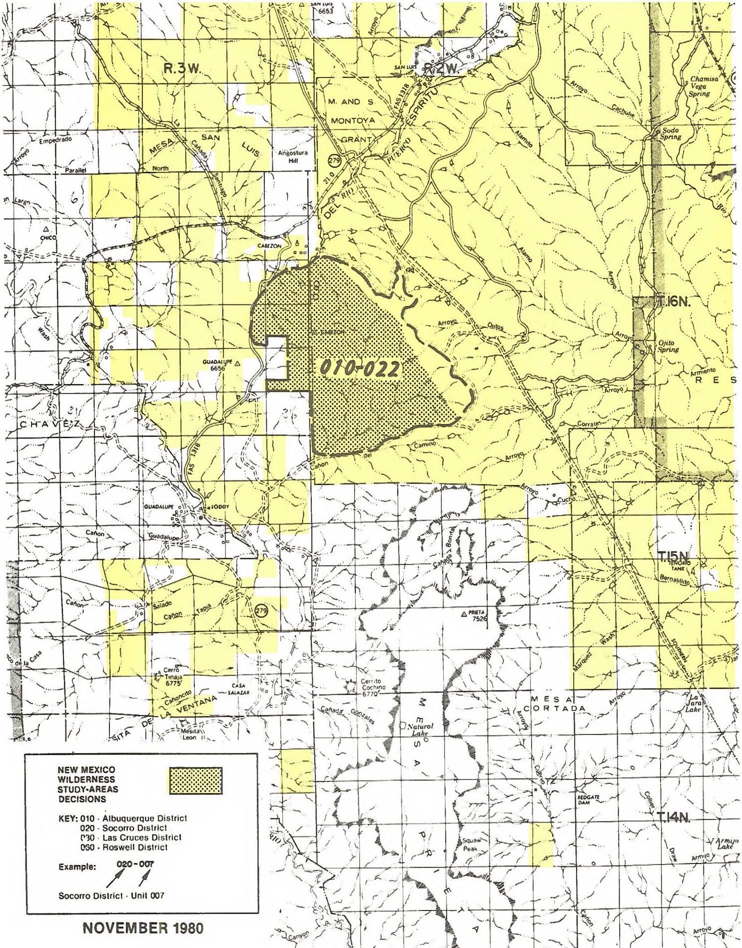
OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES: The unique geology of Cabezon provides an outstanding opportunity for those who choose to climb the peak itself or wander among the foothills. The peak provides an unequivocal internal topographic buffer for the utilization of several groups.

The area offers an opportunity for sightseeing and photography related to scenic, geologic, and cultural values as well as the occasion for climbing.

SUPPLEMENTAL VALUES: Cabezon is, in itself, a unique geological feature, and contains two prehistoric shrines on top of the peak.

Final WSA Decision

This unit contains wilderness characteristics and qualifies for wilderness study. Public input primarily supported this decision. However, several management issues were highlighted which, as mandated by the BLM's Wilderness handbook cannot be considered until the study phase. At this time, these management concerns will have significant bearing on the final Wilderness decision. Therefore, after careful consideration, including public input, Cabezon is designated as a WSA.


R.3W.
R.2W.
M. AND S. MONTOYA GRANT
MESA SAN LUIS
RIO PUERCO DEL ESPIRITU SANTO
CABEZON
GUADALUPE 6656
010-022
T.16N.
T.15N.
T.14N.
CHAVEZ
PRIETA 7526
MESA PRIETA
MESA CORTADA
Cerro Tinaja 6775
Cerrito Cochino 6770
CASA SALAZAR
Naturol Lake
Squaw Peak
REDGATE DAM
La Jara Lake
Armijo Lake
Ojito Spring
Sodo Spring
Chamisa Vega Spring
Angostura Hill
NEW MEXICO WILDERNESS STUDY-AREAS DECISIONS
KEY: 010 - Albuquerque District
020 - Socorro District
030 - Las Cruces District
060 - Roswell District
Example: 020-007
Socorro District - Unit 007
NOVEMBER 1980

Ojito NM-010-024 Unit Acreage: 15,189
WSA Acreage: 11,200

Unit Description

Ojito is located approximately 5 miles southwest of the village of San Ysidro, New Mexico. The unit consists of steep and rocky terrain interspersed with several steep canyons. Vegetative cover is primarily pinyon-juniper, shrubs and grasses. Arroyo Bernalillo and Arroyo Quesencia provide an intermittent water supply.

Wilderness Characteristics

SIZE: During Intensive Inventory, Ojito was found to contain 15,189 acres of public land, approximately 640 acres of State land, and approximately 950 acres of private land.

Public input recommended a boundary change which would eliminate the major imprints of man. This resulted in an inventory unit comprised of approximately 11,200 acres of public land, approximately 640 acres of State land, and approximately 480 acres of private land.

It is bounded on the north by property boundaries; on the west by a powerline right-of-way; on the south by a combination of county maintained road and gas pipeline right-of-way; and on the east by a combination maintained road and ridgeline.

NATURALNESS: The revised inventory unit of 11,200 acres is primarily affected by the forces of nature and therefore, natural. The major intrusions including a pipeline, powerline, gas development, line camp, windmill, and several retention dams were eliminated when the unit's boundaries were modified. This left a central core containing several earthen dams well-buffered by the steep and rocky terrain, thus leaving these intrusions substantially unnoticeable.

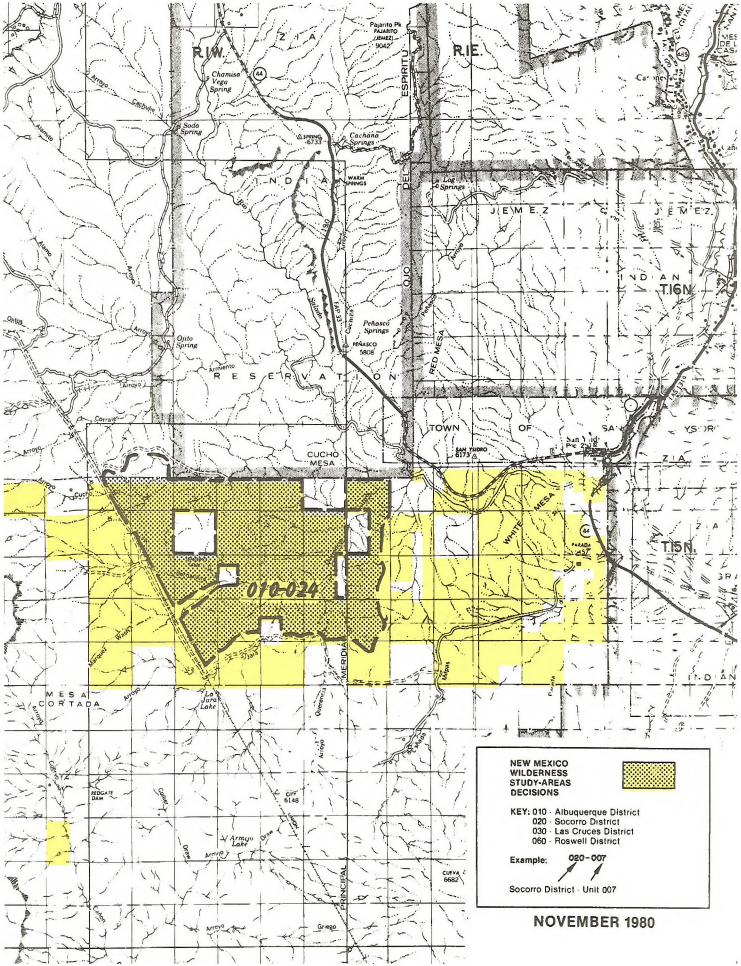
OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES: Ojito Inventory Unit provides the opportunity for solitude. The combination of the rocky, rugged terrain and low number of intrusions provides the opportunity for the user to avoid the sights and sounds of others.

Outstanding opportunities for primitive and unconfined types of recreation do exist, particularly in reference to appreciation of supplemental values.

SUPPLEMENTAL VALUES: The unit contains an abundance of prehistoric sites and paleontologic resources, as well as unique scenic values.

Recommendation

Ojito does contain Wilderness characteristics and therefore qualifies for WSA status. The modified boundaries resulting from additional inventory data presented by the public have eliminated all major intrusions. This leaves an inventory unit larger than 5,000 acres, with the impact of man substantially unnoticeable, and containing outstanding opportunities for solitude and primitive and unconfined types of recreation. Therefore, after careful consideration, including public input, Ojito is designated as a WSA.



NOVEMBER 1980

Unit Description

The Windmill Inventory Unit is approximately 18 miles southeast of Antonito, Colorado. It is located on the Colorado/New Mexico border and is contiguous with Colorado Inventory Unit, Twin Peaks (CO-050-142). The topography for the inventory unit can be characterized as a gently rolling plain with short grass and brush vegetative cover. Approximately 3 miles of the Rio Grande is included in the unit. However, due to the steepness of the canyon walls, there is no ready access to the river.

Wilderness Characteristics

SIZE: Inventory Unit NM-010-033 was divided into two inventory units by a road. These units are NM-010-033 and NM-010-033(a) which is contiguous to CO-050-142. Due to revised estimates, NM-010-033 contains 9,447 acres of public land and 55 acres of private. NM-010-033(a) contains 1,110 acres of public land in New Mexico plus 2,960 acres in Colorado. The total for NM-010-033(a) and CO-050-142 is 4,060.

NATURALNESS: NM-010-033(a) contains a metal tank, water catchment, exclosure and a loading ramp which cause the area to be significantly impacted by the imprint of man. NM-010-033 contains two major impacts which significantly impact naturalness.

OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES: Neither inventory unit provides outstanding opportunities for solitude or primitive or unconfined recreation, primarily because of limitations imposed by topography and vegetation. Both inventory units do provide opportunities for solitude only when there are no other visitors within the same viewscape. These opportunities for solitude cannot be described as outstanding. The portion of the Rio Grande Gorge located in NM-010-033 cannot contribute to these elements, as it is not accessible to visitors, and in fact becomes a natural barrier.

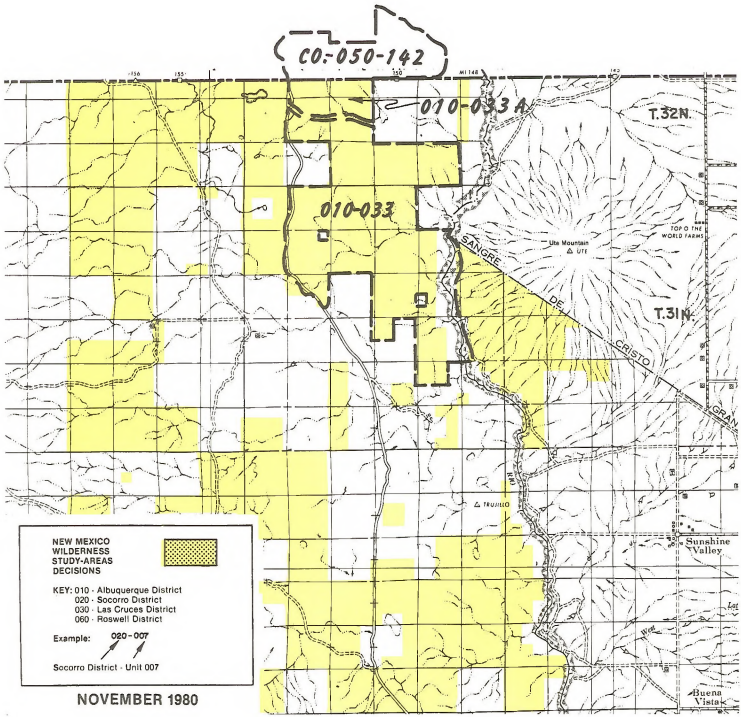
SUPPLEMENTAL VALUES: The Rio Grande Canyon contains an excellent population of raptor species.

Recommendation

The majority of public input registered support for recommending Windmill (NM-010-033) for WSA status. However, this input did not include any new inventory information. It was pointed out that the area represented a unique grassland ecosystem and important wildlife habitat. These resources will be examined through the Bureau's planning system, and ACEC designation considered to protect these specific values. Therefore, after careful consideration, including public input, Windmill is dropped from further Wilderness consideration.

R.10E R.11E. R.12E.

COLORADO



NOVEMBER 1980

Unit Description

San Antonio is located north of San Antonio Mountain, approximately 5 miles south-west of Antonito, Colorado. It is bordered on the east by U.S. 285; and on the west by the Carson National Forest. The unit is composed of broad, gently rolling sagebrush and grass plains bisected in its western portions by the 140 foot deep San Antonio river canyon. This canyon is covered by riparian vegetation which include patches of lush summer grasses intermixed with large ponderosa pine. The river flows on an intermittent-seasonal basis.

Wilderness Characteristics

SIZE: This unit has been found to contain 18,130 acres of public land and 1,920 acres of state inholdings. The eastern boundary of the 7,050 acre portion of the unit with wilderness characteristics has been placed along a two-wire telephone line owned by Johns-Manville Perilite Corporation of Antonito, Colorado. This excludes 11,080 acres of public land which are not natural.

NATURALNESS: The San Antonio Inventory Unit is divided into two distinct areas by an existing overhead telephone line. The public land located to the west of the telephone line (approximately 7,050 acres) is natural and, except for a portion of a jeep trail and approximately 2-3/4 miles of fenceline, is almost pristine. The predominant influence upon this portion of the landscape is approximately 5-1/2 miles of the pristine San Antonio Canyon. The public land portions of the inventory unit to the east of the existing overhead telephone line (approximately 11,080 acres) are impacted by 9 vehicular ways, two stock watering ponds, a major, visible electrical transmission line in the north-east corner of the unit, two corrals and an extensive network of fencelines. The cumulative impact of these man-made impacts upon the landscape when viewed in context with its relatively modest rolling terrain and lack of significant vegetative screening can be characterized as not-natural in appearance.

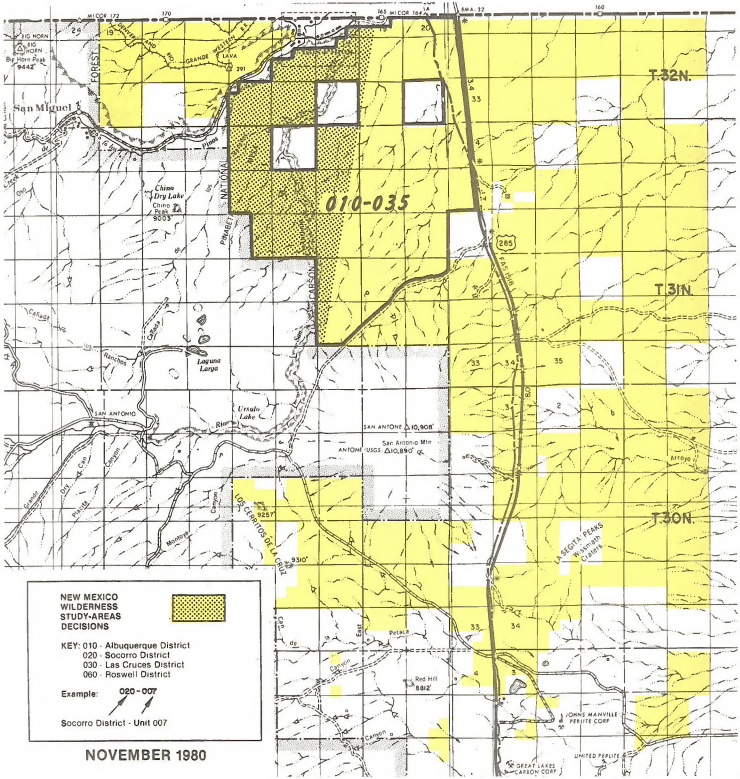
OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES: San Antonio provides an outstanding opportunity for solitude. San Antonio Canyon acts as both a natural buffer to the unit's western portion and provides in itself a topographic and vegetative screen to users who venture into its accessible but remote canyon floor. San Antonio does not offer an outstanding opportunity for primitive and unconfined recreation.

SUPPLEMENTAL VALUES: The unit contains an important wildlife habitat. Deer and elk utilize the area as a major migratory path moving seasonally from Colorado into New Mexico.

Final WSA Decision

The western 7,050 acres of the unit contain wilderness characteristics and qualify for wilderness study. The remaining 11,080 should be deleted from further consideration as wilderness. Public input primarily supported this rationale. Therefore, after careful consideration, including public input, the western 7,050 acres of San Antonio is designated as a WSA.

R.8E. R.9E.


T.32N.
T.31N.
T.30N.
010-035
San Miguel
Chimo Dry Lake
Laguna Larga
Ursulo Lake
SAN ANTONIO
SAN ANTONE △10,908'
San Antonio Mtn
ANTONE USGS △10,896'
LOS PINOS
Red Hill
6812'
LA SEGITA PEAKS WILDERNESS STUDY AREA
JOHNS MANVILLE PERLITE CORP
GREAT LAKES CARBON CORP
UNITED PERLITE CO
NEW MEXICO WILDERNESS STUDY-AREAS DECISIONS
KEY: 010 - Albuquerque District
020 - Socorro District
030 - Las Cruces District
060 - Roswell District
Example: 020 - 007
Socorro District - Unit 007
NOVEMBER 1980

Cerro de la Olla NM-010-036 Unit Acreage: 13,283

Unit Description

Located approximately 11 miles northwest of the village of Questa, New Mexico, this unit consists of mountainous terrain rising in elevation from 7,670 feet to 9,464 feet, surrounded by rolling foothills. Vegetation is very dense, with heavy stands of pinyon-juniper in the lower elevations, and thick Ponderosa pine and spruce cover in the higher elevations. The top of Cerro de la Olla has several broad, grassy meadows.

Wilderness Characteristics

SIZE: This unit has been found to contain 13,283 acres of public land and 1,294 acres of state inholdings. It is bounded on the west, east, north and south by a combination of property boundaries and maintained roads.

NATURALNESS: Cerro de la Olla does not appear to be natural. The cumulative impact of several significant impacts dispersed throughout the unit do not allow even a boundary adjustment to be considered and still leave an area which will fulfill both the naturalness and size criteria. Significant intrusions could be eliminated if a boundary adjustment were made based on naturalness. This, however, would still leave the major impact of a 1-acre catchment in the center of the remaining acreage. The evidence of man is so blatant and occurs in such a pattern throughout the unit that not even the dense vegetation or mountainous terrain of Cerro de la Olla can totally mitigate their impact.

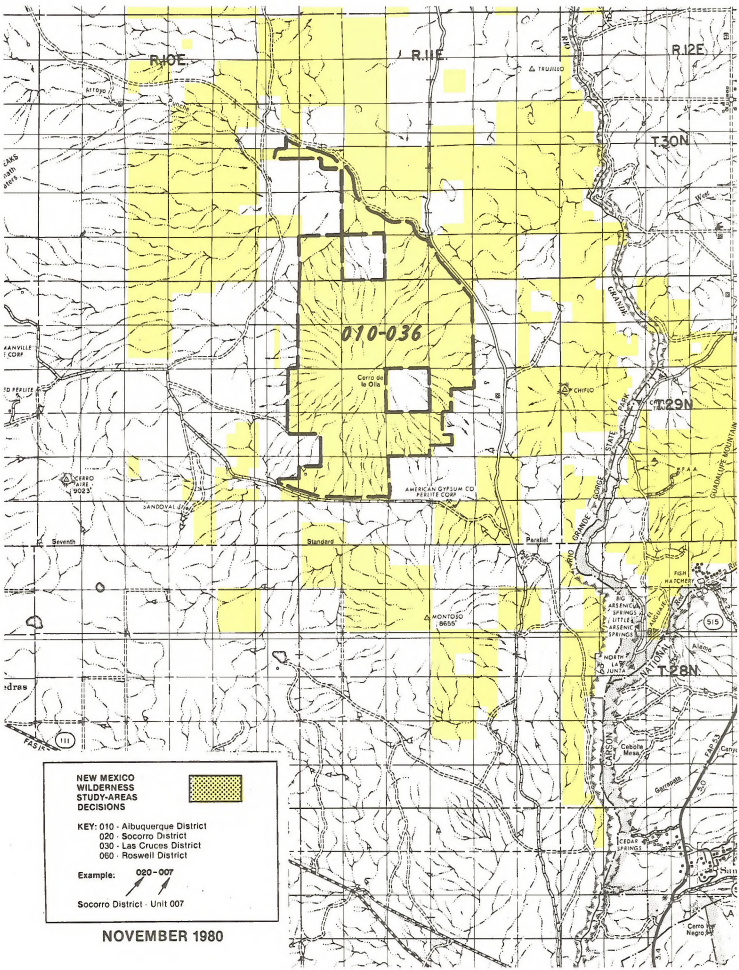
OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES: Inventory Unit NM-010-036, Cerro de la Olla, provides an outstanding opportunity for solitude. The steep canyons running down the sides of Cerro de la Olla are particularly rugged and isolated. Dense vegetation along the slopes as well as the foothills greatly enhance the opportunity to experience solitude.

In addition, Cerro de la Olla provides an outstanding opportunity for hunting, backpacking, and sightseeing.

SUPPLEMENTAL VALUES: Inventory Unit NM-010-036 contains historic, scenic, and wildlife supplemental values.

Final WSA Decision

This unit is not natural and therefore, does not qualify for wilderness study. Public input primarily agreed with this decision. Cerro de la Olla will be dropped from further Wilderness consideration.


R.10E.
R.11E.
R.12E.
T.30N
T.29N
T.28N
010-036
Cerro de la Olla
AMERICAN GYSPUM CO
PERLITE CORP.
Standard
Parallel
Seventh
MONTOSO
9605
CHIFIO
NEW MEXICO
WILDERNESS
STUDY-AREAS
DECISIONS
KEY: 010 - Albuquerque District
020 - Socorro District
030 - Las Cruces District
060 - Roswell District
Example: 020-007
Socorro District - Unit 007
NOVEMBER 1980

Sabinosa NM-010-055 Unit Acreage: 15,760
WSA Acreage: 15,760

Unit Description

Sabinosa is located approximately 8 air miles northeast of Trujillo, New Mexico, 20 air miles northwest of Conchas Reservoir and 1/2 mile due west of Sabinosa, New Mexico. The inventory unit is composed of a series of high, narrow shelves surrounded by steep rock-walled canyons. The area is covered with thick vegetation. Tree stands within the unit range in variety from ponderosa pine to pinyon-juniper to oak. Grama grass and side-oats grama, snakeweed, little blue stem grass, and cholla cactus are all found in abundance within the area.

Wilderness Characteristics

SIZE: This unit contains 15,760 acres plus a 250-acre private inholding.

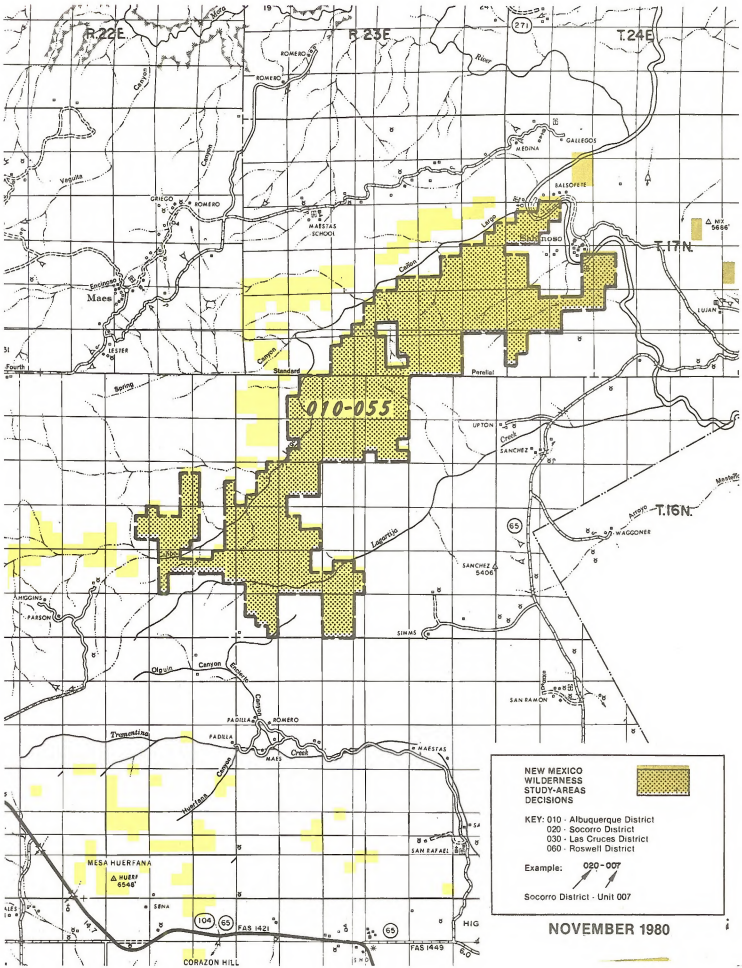
NATURALNESS: Sabinosa, NM-010-055, is natural in character when viewed as a whole. The extreme topographic relief found within the area and the dense vegetative cover upon the landscape aid in concealing the minor man-made impacts within NM-010-055. These impacts include: 4 miles of wooden fence line, 10 small stock ponds, several small wooden corrals, and an underground telephone line. Two minor boundary adjustments were made to exclude a "cherry stem" graded road in T. 16 N., R. 23 E., Section 4 and an overhead electrical powerline in T. 17 N., R. 24 E., Sections 21 and 28.

OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES: Inventory Unit, NM-010-055, provides an outstanding opportunity for solitude. The combination of the numerous, remote canyons and the densely vegetated landscape provide an environment that contributes to outstanding opportunities for users to avoid the sights and sounds of both other users within the area and influences of man outside of the inventory unit. Sabinosa provides outstanding examples of challenging recreation opportunities. Opportunities for backpacking and hiking within this area are abundant.

SUPPLEMENTAL VALUES: Sabinosa contains important barbary sheep and wild turkey habitat. A number of cultural resource sites have been found within the area. The majority of these localities are associated with the homesteading which occurred within the region in the mid 1800's.

Final WSA Decision

The area contains wilderness characteristics and qualifies for wilderness study. Public input primarily supported this decision. Wildlife and social management concerns were also brought to the BLM's attention. These management concerns cannot be considered until the study phase. At this time, they will have a significant bearing on the final Wilderness decision. Therefore, after careful consideration, including public input, Sabinosa is designated as a WSA.


R.22E.
R.23E.
T.24E.
T.17N.
T.16N.
010-055
ROMERO
GALLEGOS
MEDINA
GREGG
MAESTAS SCHOOL
BALSOFETE
TIOBO
LUJAN
Maes
LESTER
Standard
Pential
UPTON
SANCHEZ
WAGGONER
SANCHEZ 5406
SIMMS
PARSON
ANGGINES
SAN RAMON
PADILLA
MAESTAS
MESA HUERFANA
HUERF 6548'
SENA
SAN RAFAEL
CORAZON HILL
FAS 1421
FAS 1449
NEW MEXICO WILDERNESS STUDY-AREAS DECISIONS
KEY: 010 - Albuquerque District
020 - Socorro District
030 - Las Cruces District
060 - Roswell District
Example: 020-007
Socorro District - Unit 007
NOVEMBER 1980

Seco NM-010-056 Unit Acreage: 6,550

Unit Description

The unit is located just south of the community of Chimayo in Santa Fe County, New Mexico. Composed of steep, broken, and severely eroded sandstone ridges which are divided by sandy, vast arroyos, Seco is vegetated with scattered pinyon-juniper and shortgrass. This public land unit is surrounded on its western and northern borders by heavily populated areas.

Wilderness Characteristics

SIZE: This unit originally contained 8,960 acres of public land. A boundary modification to exclude a "cherry stem" graded road which serves a Santa Fe County landfill in T. 20 N., R. 9 E., Section 13, has been made; the unit now contains 6,550 acres.

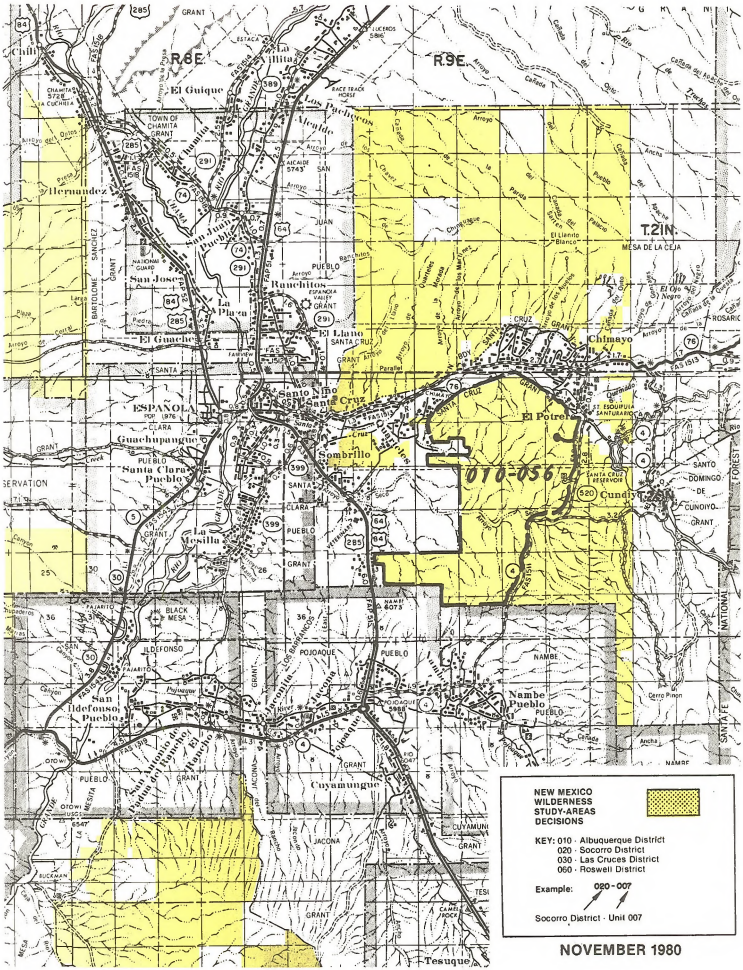
NATURALNESS: Inventory Unit NM-010-056, Seco, does not have 5,000 acres of contiguous public land which are natural in character. A heavy concentration of 17 man-made intrusions and 18 vehicular ways or trails within the central 1/3 of the unit have impacted this portion to a degree that it no longer can be considered natural. The remaining sections of the unit which are natural in character no longer meet the size and manageability criteria as required for wilderness study area designation.

OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES: Seco provides an outstanding opportunity for solitude in its north-central sections. The extremely rugged and broken topography within this area produce a natural terrain screening factor which provides outstanding opportunities for potential users to avoid the sights and sounds of other users within the unit. Seco does not offer an outstanding opportunity for primitive and unconfined recreation since its opportunities for hiking, backpacking, camping and photography are neither unusual nor outstanding, and may be found in numerous other areas within the Albuquerque District's public lands.

SUPPLEMENTAL VALUES: Seco inventory unit contains a number of paleontological localities. Frequently referred to as Skull Ridge or the White Quarry operation, these localities contain fossils of large mammals which are estimated to be approximately 20 million years old.

Final WSA Decision

Seco does not contain the required wilderness characteristics for wilderness study. Public input primarily agreed with this rationale. Therefore, after careful consideration, including public input, Seco will be dropped from further Wilderness consideration.


R.8E.
R.9E.
T.21N.
010-056
NEW MEXICO
WILDERNESS
STUDY-AREAS
DECISIONS
KEY: 010 - Albuquerque District
020 - Socorro District
030 - Las Cruces District
060 - Roswell District
Example: 020 - 007
Socorro District - Unit 007
NOVEMBER 1980

Navajo Peak NM-010-059 Unit Acreage: 7,750
WSA Acreage: 7,750

Unit Description

Navajo Peak is located approximately 3.5 air miles south of El Vado, New Mexico. The unit is contiguous to the U.S. Forest Service's RARE II Area 098, Chama Extension which is recommended for further planning. It is composed of a combination of gently rolling grass and sage plains bordered by dense ponderosa stands and the northern portions of Gallina Peak. The unit is bisected on a north-south line by the Chama River which meanders through a 900 foot canyon.

Wilderness Characteristics

SIZE: Due to additional data from intensive inventory, the Navajo Peak Unit increased in size and was divided into three units: NM-010-059 Navajo Peak, (7,750 acres); NM-010-059A, Navajo Peak-northwest (1,139 acres); and NM-010-059B, Navajo Peak-northeast (365 acres). The latter two units are not of sufficient size for practical preservation and use in an unimpaired condition. The Navajo Peak unit contains 480 acres of private inholdings.

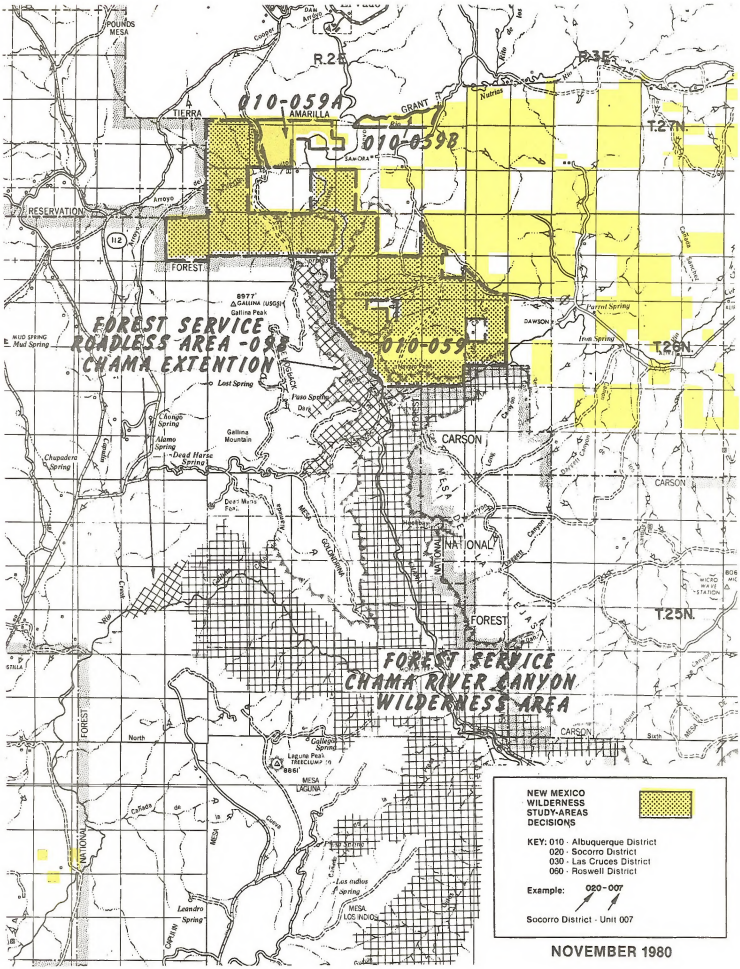
NATURALNESS: Each of the three areas contain numerous intrusions which impact the area's naturalness. The original inventory unit was divided into three areas by roads and landownership patterns. In unit, NM-010-059, 16 intrusions, including 12 vehicular ways, were identified. The cumulative impact of these ways is minimized when the unit is viewed as a whole.

OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES: Inventory Unit NM-010-059, Navajo Peak offers an outstanding opportunity for solitude. The combination of dense ponderosa pine stands and the extremely varied topography provides excellent screening of potential visitors from one another. Because of the relatively small size of the Navajo Peak sub-units (NM-010-059A and NM-010-059B), it is difficult for visitors utilizing these areas to achieve an outstanding opportunity for solitude. Inventory Unit NM-010-059 provides outstanding recreation opportunities for hiking, fishing, primitive camping, and canoeing. Sub-inventory units NM-010-059A and NM-010-059B provide similar opportunities in quantity to NM-010-059 but not of the same quality, primarily because of their limited size.

SUPPLEMENTAL VALUES: All three units provide scenic vistas overlooking Chama Canyon.

Final WSA Decision

Navajo Peak, NM-010-059, contains wilderness characteristics and qualifies for wilderness study. NM-010-059A and NM-010-059B lack adequate size. Public input primarily agreed with this decision. Several reports of existing roads and major intrusions were examined. Further deliberation by the BLM supported the original recommendation. Therefore, after careful consideration, including public input, Navajo Peak is designated as a WSA.


010-059A
010-059B
010-059
FOREST SERVICE
ROADLESS AREA -082
CHAMA EXTENTION
FOREST SERVICE
CHAMA RIVER CANYON
WILDERNESS AREA
R.2E.
R.3E.
T.27N.
T.26N.
T.25N.
TIERRA AMARILLA
GRANT
RESERVATION
FOREST
CARSON
NATIONAL
FOREST
POUNDS MESA
Gallina Mountain
Chupadera Spring
Dead Horse Spring
Alamo Spring
Lost Spring
Piano Spring
Parrott Spring
Iron Spring
Dawson
Mud Spring
Leandro Spring
Los Pinos Spring
MESA LOS ROJOS
MESA LAGUNA
Ligurte Peak
Gallego Spring
Sixth
North
NEW MEXICO
WILDERNESS
STUDY-AREAS
DECISIONS
KEY: 010 - Albuquerque District
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060 - Roswell District
Example: 020-007
Socorro District - Unit 007
NOVEMBER 1980

Empedrado NM-010-063 Unit Acreage: 9,454
WSA Acreage: 8,419

Unit Description

Empedrado is located approximately four miles northwest of the village of Guadalupe. The unit consists of broken terrain with sandstone mesas and rolling grassland, interspersed with intermittent arroyos and washes including both Torreon Wash and Chico Arroyo. Vegetation includes a variety of grasses and cacti, as well as pinyon-juniper cover located primarily in the northwestern portion of the inventory unit.

Chico Arroyo provides a seasonal water supply, supplementing that provided by springs.

Wilderness Characteristics

SIZE: This unit has been found to contain 8,419 acres of public land and 329 acres of private inholdings. It is bounded on the north, east and south by maintained roads, and on the west by a combination of maintained roads and property boundaries. This excludes 1,035 acres of the inventory unit which lack naturalness.

NATURALNESS: The majority of the Empedrado Inventory Unit appears to be natural. The cumulative impact of the existing impacts (minimal evidence of mineral exploration and several small retention dams) are not considered to be significant enough to impair the apparent naturalness of the inventory unit.

A boundary adjustment deleting 1,035 acres was recommended based on the significant impacts of a drill pad and large retention dam.

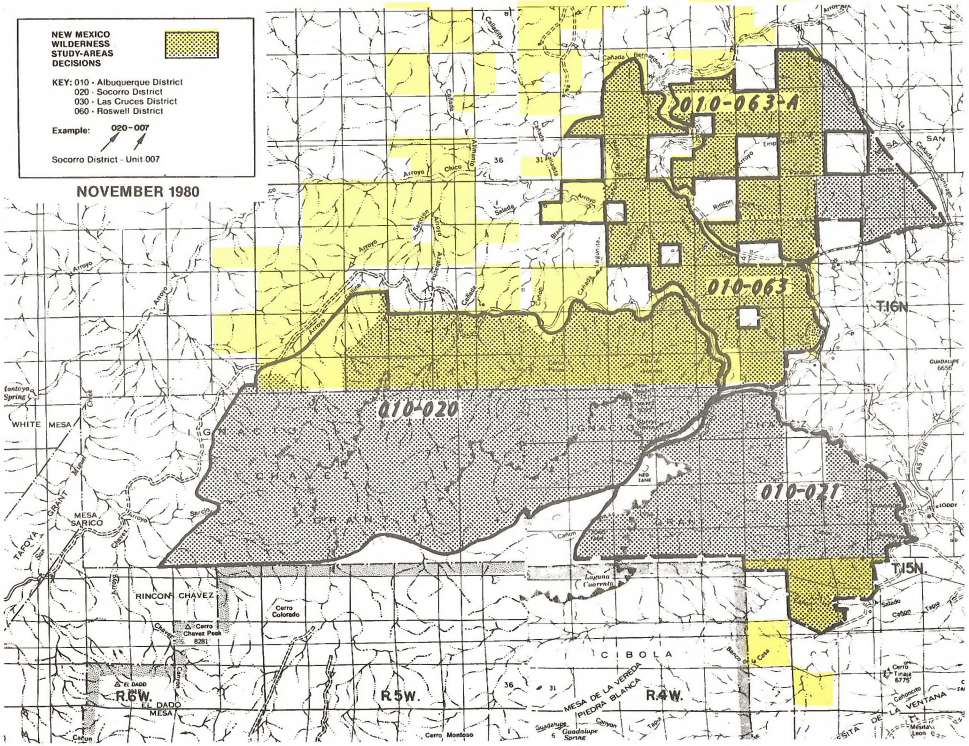
OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES: The broken terrain, particularly in the western portions of the inventory unit, provide the opportunity for solitude. Winding washes and steep sided mesas exhibit ample opportunity for the user to experience a feeling of remoteness and isolation.

Empedrado does possess opportunities for recreation, but no single recreation opportunity contained within the inventory unit may be characterized as outstanding.

SUPPLEMENTAL VALUES: The unit contains both scenic and cultural supplemental values.

Final WSA Decision

This unit contains wilderness characteristics and qualifies for wilderness study. Public input primarily supported this rationale. A report of the existence of roads maintained by the County was field checked. After further deliberation, the original recommendation was upheld. Land ownership management concerns were also brought to light. These cannot be considered during the inventory stage, but will heavily influence the final Wilderness decision during the study phase. Therefore, after careful consideration, including public input, Empedrado is designated as a WSA.


NEW MEXICO
WILDERNESS
STUDY-AREAS
DECISIONS
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030 - Las Cruces District
060 - Roswell District
Example: 020-007
Socorro District - Unit 007
NOVEMBER 1980
010-063-A
010-063
010-020
010-021
T.16N.
T.15N.
R.6W.
R.5W.
R.4W.
WHITE MESA
MESA SARICO
RINCON CHAVEZ
Cerro Colorado
Cerro Chavez Peak 8281
EL DADO MESA
CIBOLA
MESA DE LA VEREDA PIEDRA BLANCA
Cerro Montoso
Laguna Cuarenta
Cerro Tinaja 6775
MESA DE LA VENTANA
TAFOYA GRANT
IGNACIO CHAVEZ GRANT

La Lena NM-010-063A Unit Acreage: 9,359
WSA Acreage: 9,359

Unit Description

La Lena is located approximately 7 miles north of the village of Guadalupe. The unit consists of broken terrain with steep sided mesas cut by a network of arroyos. Vegetation includes a variety of grasses and cacti, as well as pinyon-juniper cover.

Wilderness Characteristics

SIZE: La Lena is a new inventory unit which was discovered during the early phases of the intensive inventory and contains approximately 9,359 acres of public land, and approximately 1,280 acres of state inholdings. It is bounded on the east side by maintained roads and on the south, north and west by a combination of maintained roads and property boundaries.

NATURALNESS: The La Lena Inventory Unit generally appears to be natural. The cumulative impact of several small retention dams and some evidence of mineral exploration are not considered significant enough to impair the apparent naturalness of the inventory unit.

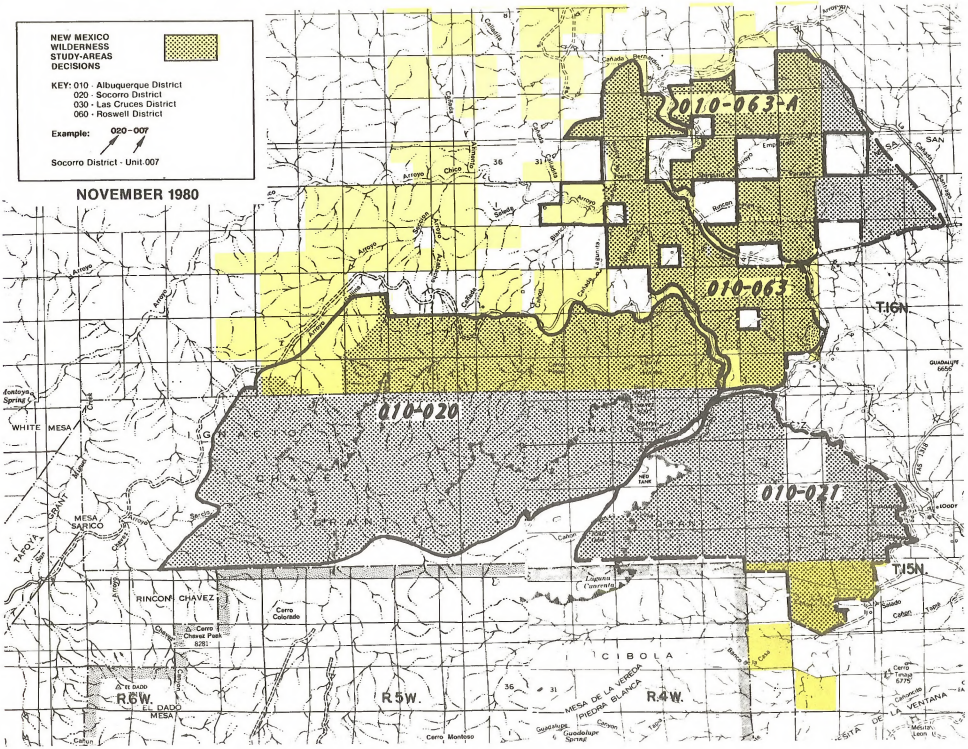
OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES: In La Lena, it is the abundance of small sandstone eroded canyons and meandering arroyos mingled with steep sided mesas which provide the topographic relief necessary to absorb a variety of user groups. The opportunity for solitude is well dispersed throughout the inventory unit.

Although La Lena does offer recreational opportunities, no single recreation opportunity contained within the inventory unit may be characterized as outstanding.

SUPPLEMENTAL VALUES: La Lena contains both scenic and cultural supplemental values.

Final WSA Decision

This unit contains wilderness characteristics and qualifies for wilderness study. Public input primarily supported this rationale. A report of the existence of roads maintained by the County was field checked. After further deliberation, the original recommendation was upheld. Land ownership management concerns were also brought to light. These cannot be considered during the inventory stage, but will heavily influence the final Wilderness decision during the study phase. Therefore, after careful consideration, including public input, La Lena is designated as a WSA.


NEW MEXICO
WILDERNESS
STUDY-AREAS
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Example: 020 - 007
Socorro District - Unit 007
NOVEMBER 1980
010-063-A
010-063
010-020
010-021
T.16N.
T.15N.
R.5W.
R.4W.
WHITE MESA
MESA SARICO
RINCON CHAVEZ
Cerro Chavez Peak
Cerro Colorado
EL DADO MESA
CIBOLA
MESA DE LA VEREDA
PIEDRA BLANCA
Cerro Montoso
SAN

Rattlesnake NM-010-090 Unit Acreage: 381

Unit Description

This inventory Unit is located 3.5 air miles northeast of Farmington, New Mexico. It is comprised of a steep-sided canyon with a rocky valley floor. Vegetative cover includes pinyon-juniper, scattered ponderosa pine and sage. The canyon drainage provides an intermittent water source.

Wilderness Characteristics

SIZE: During the intensive inventory, this unit was found to contain 381 acres of public land. It is confined to the canyon proper, the boundary consisting of the 6,600 contour along the rim.

NATURALNESS: This unit does not appear to be natural. The two pipelines, Rights-of-way #NM 24306 and NM #36750 constitute a major impairment to the naturalness of the canyon. The pipe is both buried and exposed, as well as exhibiting a wide swath of cleared vegetation on either side. Oil and gas wells and pads are dispersed within the canyon. The rugged nature of Rattlesnake is significantly impacted by the imprint of man, throughout.

OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES: This unit does not provide an outstanding opportunity for solitude. The major imprints of man widely dispersed throughout the canyon would negate any solitude potential, despite the rugged topography of the canyon.

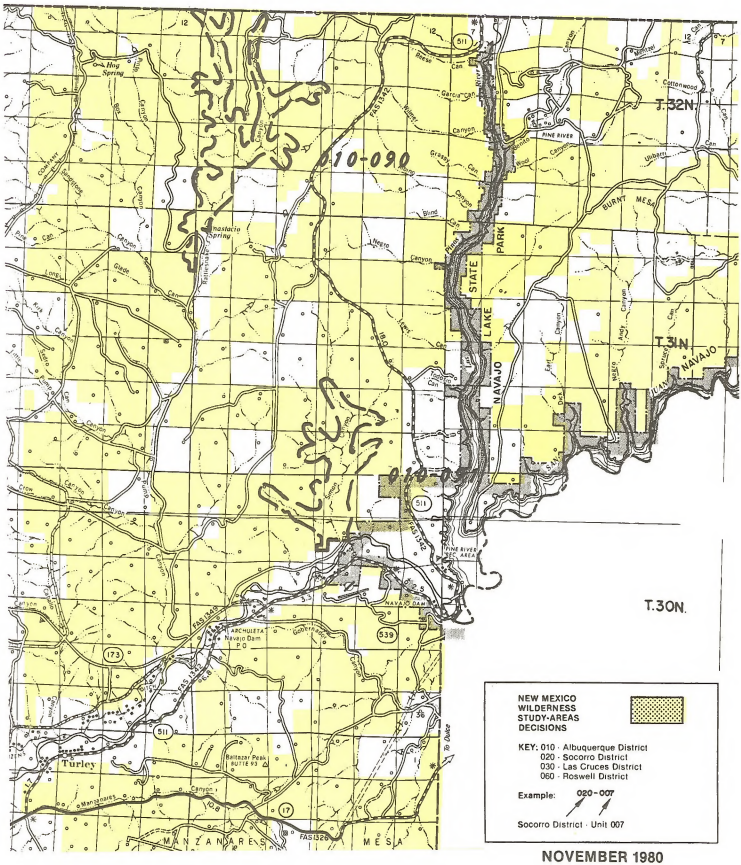
Rattlesnake provides an outstanding opportunity for hiking and sightseeing, related to wildlife and scenic values.

SUPPLEMENTAL VALUES: The unit contains both scenic and wildlife supplemental values.

Final WSA Decision

This unit does not contain wilderness characteristics and does not qualify for wilderness study. However, Rattlesnake will be evaluated as an ACEC in the Bureau's San Juan Planning Document, and is scheduled for designation in 1981. Public input supported this rationale, reinforcing their contention with photographs, maps, and site specific narrative. Therefore, Rattlesnake is dropped from further Wilderness consideration.

R.9W. R.8W. R.7W.



NOVEMBER 1980

Unit Description

This inventory unit is approximately 273 acres and is located about 25 air miles northeast of Farmington, New Mexico. It is comprised of a steep-sided canyon with a rocky valley floor. Vegetative cover includes pinyon-juniper and scattered ponderosa pine and sage.

Wilderness Characteristics

SIZE: During intensive inventory, this unit was found to contain 273 roadless acres of public land. Simon is confined to the canyon proper, the boundary consisting of the 6,200-foot contour along the rim.

NATURALNESS: Inventory Unit NM-010-091, Simon, does not appear to be natural. The pipeline spanning the canyon and two oil wells negate the possibility of naturalness, considering the small area which must absorb such a large degree of the imprint of man. The pipeline is not screened by vegetation or topography and is visible both to the north and south creating a significant imprint of man's works.

OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES: An outstanding opportunity to experience solitude has been effectively removed by the existence of the pipeline spanning the center of the canyon. A sense of solitude could not be achieved in such a small, narrow area when confronted with the pipeline; firm evidence of the impact of man.

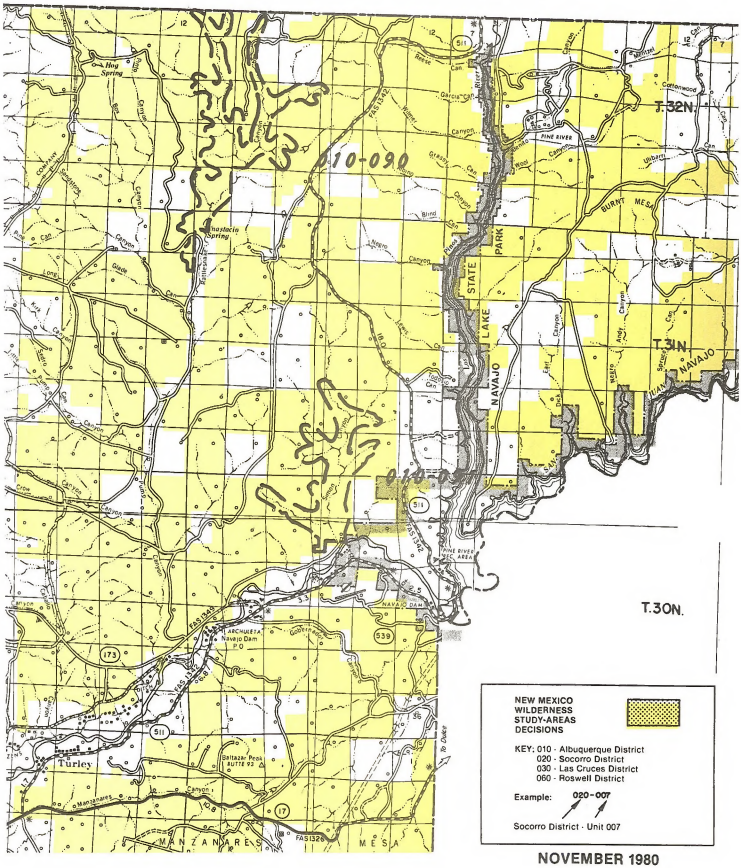
In several portions, Simon offers opportunities for hiking and sightseeing related to scenic and cultural values.

SUPPLEMENTAL VALUES: The unit contains a stabilized Navajo Refugee Site, as well as scenic values.

Final WSA Decision

This unit does not contain wilderness characteristics and does not qualify for wilderness study. However, Simon has been identified as an ACEC in the Bureau's San Juan Planning Document, and is currently in the designation process. Public input primarily supported this decision. Therefore, after careful consideration, including public input, Simon is dropped from further Wilderness consideration.

R.9W. R.8W. R.7W.



NOVEMBER 1980

Manzano NM-010-092 Unit Acreage: 845
WSA Acreage: 845

Unit Description

Inventory Unit, NM-010-092, was identified by the public at the completion of the Bureau of Land Management's (BLM's) initial wilderness inventory as an area of public land contiguous to and surrounded on two sides by the United States Forest Service's Manzano Wilderness Area in the Cibola National Forest and therefore, should be subjected to an intensive wilderness inventory to determine if the area contains wilderness characteristics. The BLM's wilderness inventory procedures list three instances in which the Bureau will examine areas less than 5,000 acres in size to determine if they possess wilderness characteristics. One of these three instances is in those cases where the BLM manages public land which is contiguous to designated wilderness areas managed by another Federal agency. Such is the case with the Manzano inventory unit.

NM-010-092 is approximately 16 air miles east, southeast of Los Lunas, New Mexico. Located in Torrance County, the unit (T. 7 N., R. 5 E., Section 31: W½; T. 6 N., R. 5 E., Section 6: W½, Section 7: W½) is situated on the western side of Bosque Peak in the Manzano Mountains and contains the mouth of Garcia Canyon. The area slopes west to east, rising from 6,200 feet at its lowest point on the western boundary to 7,400 feet at its highest point on the eastern boundary. Manzano is vegetated with scattered pinyon-juniper with some yucca and short grasses established on its western edges. The unit is moderately rocky with sandy loam soils typical of those found within an alluvial fan.

Wilderness Characteristics

SIZE: Manzano is approximately 845 acres in size.

NATURALNESS: The Manzano Inventory Unit does not contain any vehicular routes nor evidence of off-road vehicular impacts. The only man-made feature within NM-010-092 is a wooden fenceline along the area's contiguous boundary with the USFS's Manzano Wilderness. This intrusion is substantially unnoticeable when viewed from within the boundaries of NM-010-092 and subsequently has a neligible impact upon the unit's naturalness.

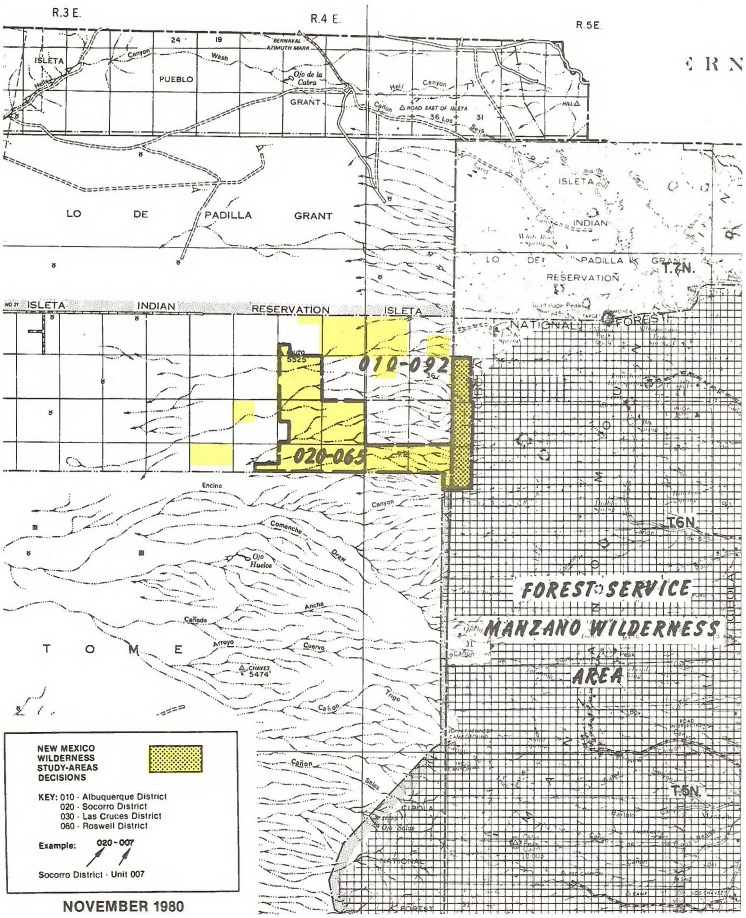
OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES: Manzano Inventory Unit contains four primary drainage patterns including the mouth of Garcia Canyon which may be easily utilized as access routes by visitors into the adjacent Manzano Wilderness Area. While these drainage patterns will tend to concentrate visitors within the area and subsequently reduce their opportunities for solitude within NM-010-092, it must be recognized that an outstanding opportunity for solitude does exist within the adjacent Manzano Wilderness Area. It cannot be argued that Manzano, NM-010-092, does not contain an outstanding opportunity for solitude since its topographic features tend to concentrate visitors within the same localities, because Manzano is part of a larger topographic feature (Bosque Peak) which does contain an outstanding opportunity for solitude. It therefore, should be evaluated upon that basis without regard to artificial Federal administrative boundaries. Any forthcoming study of NM-010-092 to determine its suitability for designation as an addition to the Manzano Wilderness Area will focus upon the validity of adding the adjacent public land to the existing wilderness and the benefits of such a boundary modifications to the overall management by the U.S. Forest Service of the Manzano.

The evaluation of outstanding opportunities for primitive and unconfined types of recreation for NM-010-092 is dependent, as was the case for solitude, upon those characteristics which exist within the contiguous Manzano Wilderness Area. While NM-010-092 does not possess opportunities which could be characterized as outstanding it must be recognized that these outstanding opportunities do exist within the adjacent wilderness area and therefore must be identified and consequently affiliated with NM-010-092.

SUPPLEMENTAL VALUES: Manzano contains no supplemental values.

Final WSA Decision

NM-010-092, Manzano, is adjacent to, and contiguous on, the south and east within the United States Forest Service's designated Manzano Wilderness Area in the Cibola National Forest. It belongs to the same geologic and topographic feature (Bosque Peak) as those areas administered by the FS as wilderness. NM-010-092 is natural, and of sufficient size to make practical its preservation and use in an unimpaired condition because of its terrain and proximity to the designated FS wilderness area. NM-010-092 shares an affiliation with the Manzano Wilderness Area in that it provides of outstanding opportunities for solitude and primitive and unconfined types of recreation. Therefore, after careful consideration, including public input, Manzano is designated as a WSA.


R.3 E.
R.4 E.
R.5E.
ISLETA
PUEBLO
Ojo de la Cabra GRANT
LO DE PADILLA GRANT
ISLETA INDIAN RESERVATION
ISLETA INDIAN RESERVATION
LO DE PADILLA GRANT
T.7N.
NATIONAL FOREST
010-092
020-065
T6N
FOREST SERVICE
MANZANO WILDERNESS
AREA
T O M E
T5N
NEW MEXICO WILDERNESS STUDY-AREAS DECISIONS
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Socorro District - Unit 007
NOVEMBER 1980

SOCORRO DISTRICT

Arlen P. Kennedy, District Manager

Rimrock NM-020-007 Unit Acreage: 29,430
WSA Acreage: 29,430

Unit Description

This unit is topographically diverse. Landforms include open grassland, park-like valleys, rugged box canyons, immense sandstone cliffs, the largest natural bridge in New Mexico, and the rimrock of Cebollita Mesa. Vegetation varies from blue grama grass and pinyon-juniper to Douglas fir. Elevations range from 6,900 to 8,300 feet. Rimrock is located approximately twenty air miles southeast of Grants.

Wilderness Characteristics

SIZE: 29,430 acres

NATURALNESS: The Rimrock Unit appears to be affected primarily by the forces of nature with the imprint of man substantially unnoticeable when considered in the context of the unit as a whole.

Human intrusions include nine earthen stock tanks, one wooden windmill, ten miles of barbed wire fencing and nine vehicle trails.

OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES: The topographic and vegetative diversity of Rimrock, coupled with the unit's relatively large size, afford human visitors outstanding opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation. Opportunities include hiking, backpacking, rock climbing, horseback riding, nature study, photography, and hunting. The unit also possesses outstanding opportunities for the experience of solitude.

SUPPLEMENTAL VALUES: The largest natural bridge in New Mexico is located within Rimrock. The unit further contains numerous archeological sites. Wildlife values are significant.

Final WSA Decision

Rimrock was nominated for designation as a WSA by the Socorro District. Public comment strongly supported this recommendation (22 individual comments). The primary reasons offered in support of WSA status include the units's relatively large size, naturalness, outstanding opportunities for both solitude and primitive recreation, and the presence of significant supplemental values.

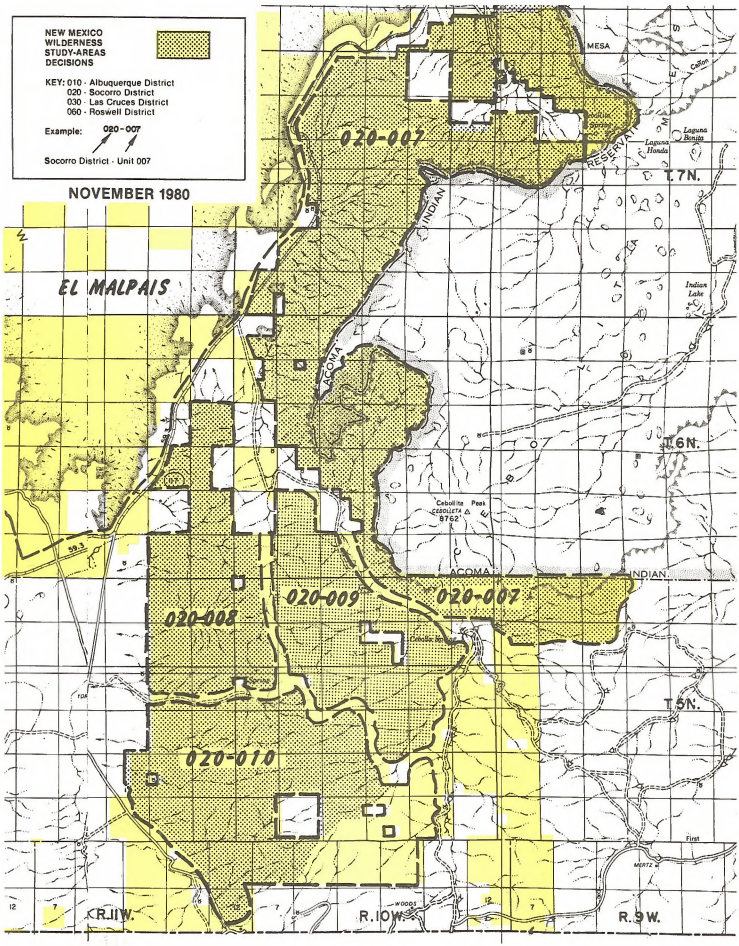
Opposition to the designation of Rimrock as a WSA (9 individual comments) centered on the fact the area is not pristine. Opponents correctly indicated the unit contains range improvements, has primitive vehicle routes within it, and is bordered on the west by State Road 117.

The fact Rimrock is not "pristine" was known and indicated by the BLM in both its Intensive Inventory Report and the WSA Recommendation Summary. The BLM has never claimed Rimrock to be pristine. The Bureau simply maintains the area appears natural and meets the naturalness criteria of the Wilderness Act.

Consistent opposition was also received which cited various resource conflicts, including the possibility the area is underlain by economically recoverable coal deposits, the fact it possesses pinyon-juniper stands suitable for fuelwood cutting, and is claimed by the Acoma Indians as ancestral land. Resource conflicts, however, have no bearing on the WSA decision and were not considered at this time.

A number of persons and an informal group (6 comments) proposed uniting the Rimrock Unit with the Little Rimrock, Sand Canyon, and Pinyon Units into a single WSA. The four units are separated by three vehicle routes. The rationale for proposing the union of the four areas is that the dividing "roads" are in fact "ways". The BLM decided the vehicle routes in question (the Cebolla Canyon, Sand Canyon, and Armijo Canyon routes) are primitive roads. The union of Units NM 020-007/008/009/010 was, therefore, rejected.

Rimrock Unit NM 020-007 is designated a WSA as proposed on March 30, 1980.


NEW MEXICO
WILDERNESS
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Example: 020-007
Socorro District - Unit 007
NOVEMBER 1980
EL MALPAIS
020-007
020-008
020-009
020-010
020-007
MESA
Cotton
Laguna Bonita
Laguna Honda
RESERVATION
INDIAN
ACOMA
Indian Lake
T.7N.
T.6N.
T.5N.
Cebollita Peak
CEBOLLETA
8762'
ACOMA
INDIAN
59.3
First
MERTZ
WOODS
R.11W.
R.10W.
R.9W.

Sand Canyon NM-020-008 Unit Acreage: 8,320
WSA Acreage: 8,320

Unit Description

The Sand Canyon Unit is located approximately thirty air miles southeast of Grants. It is contiguous to both the Little Rimrock (NM-020-009) and Pinyon (NM-020-010) units, being separated from those areas only by primitive roads. Sand Canyon is forested, primarily with old growth pinyon-juniper but also with scattered stands of ponderosa pine. Elevations range from 7,100 to 7,800 feet. The area is bisected from north to south by a series of sandstone mesas which are cut by numerous canyons and draws. A spring is present in the southern portion of the unit.

Wilderness Characteristics

SIZE: 8,320 acres

NATURALNESS: Unit NM-020-008 appears to be affected primarily by the forces of nature with the imprint of man substantially unnoticeable. Three earthen tanks. seven miles of fencing, and two vehicle ways are present in the area.

OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES: Sand Canyon provides outstanding opportunities for solitude. The varied and rugged topography of the unit coupled with it forest cover and isolated location insure the visitor a high degree of solitude. Primitive recreation opportunities are also considered outstanding for cross-country hiking, backpacking, and horseback riding.

SUPPLEMENTAL VALUES: This area possesses significant archaeological resources. Wildlife values are high for raptors, deer, and wild turkey. Mountain lion are occassionally present within the unit.

Final WSA Decision

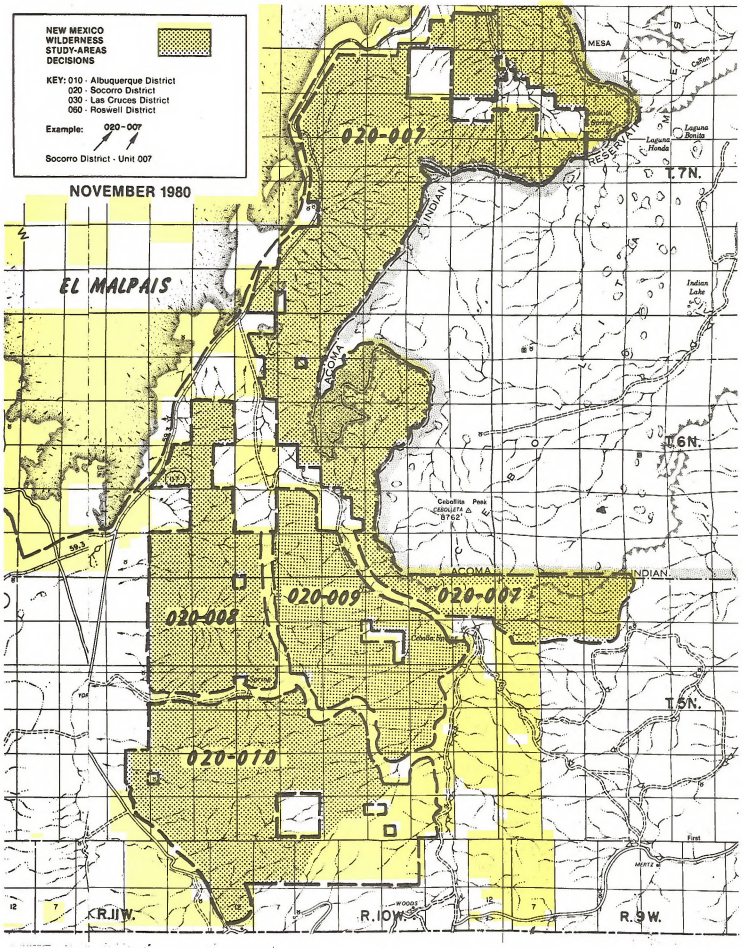
Sand Canyon was nominated for designation as a WSA by the Socorro District. Public comment for the most part strongly supported this recommendation (18 individual comments). The reasons cited included the fact the Sand Canyon Unit meets the size criteria, appears natural, offers outstanding opportunities for both solitude and primitive recreation, and possesses high supplemental values.

Opponents of the WSA recommendation (5 individual comments) most consistantly cited lack of naturalness due to the presence of range improvements as a reason for dropping the area from further wilderness consideration. However, the Sand Canyon Unit is impacted by relatively few range improvements (three earthen tanks and seven miles of fencing) which are substantially unnoticeable when considered in the context of this topographically varied unit.

Two commentors opposing Sand Canyon maintained the area lacked outstanding opportunities for solitude. The BLM cannot agree with this assessment. The Sand Canyon Unit is isolated and its landforms provide a high degree of topographic screening. In addition, the area possesses outstanding recreational opportunities.

Resource conflicts were cited as a supporting reason for dropping Sand Canyon by all but one opponent. However, the BLM cannot consider resource conflicts when making a WSA decision.

Sand Canyon Unit NM-020-008 is designated a WSA as proposed on March 30, 1980.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Socorro District - Unit 007
NOVEMBER 1980
EL MALPAIS
020-007
020-008
020-009
020-010
020-007
MESA
Laguna Bonita
Laguna Honda
Indian Lake
Cebollita Peak
CEBOLLITA
8762'
ACOMA
INDIAN
RESERVATION
T.7N.
T.6N.
T.5N.
R.11W.
R.10W.
R.9W.
59.3
First
MERTA
WOODS

Little Rimrock NM-020-009 Unit Acreage: 9,540
WSA Acreage: 9,540

Unit Description

Little Rimrock is located approximately thirty-three air miles southeast of Grants. It is contiguous to the Rimrock (NM-020-007), Sand Canyon (NM-020-008) and Pinyon (NM-020-010) units, being separated from those areas only by primitive roads. Little Rimrock is forested, primarily with old growth pinyon-juniper, but also with scattered stands of ponderosa pine. Elevations range from 7,100 to 7,900 feet. The area is bisected from north to south by a series of sandstone mesas which are cut by a maze of canyons and draws. The area is predominantly rugged, although flat mesa tops and wide canyon bottoms are common.

Wilderness Characteristics

SIZE: 9,540 acres

NATURALNESS: Unit NM-020-009 appears to be affected primarily by the forces of nature with the impact of man substantially unnoticeable. Human impacts include dim two-track ways, three earthen tanks, and five miles of fencing.

OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES: The varied and rugged topography of Little Rimrock coupled with its forest cover and isolated location insure the visitor an outstanding solitude experience. Primitive recreation opportunities are also considered outstanding for cross-country hiking, backpacking, and horseback riding.

SUPPLEMENTAL VALUES: Little Rimrock possesses significant archaeological resources. Wildlife values are high for raptors, deer, and wild turkey. Mountain lion have been sighted in the unit.

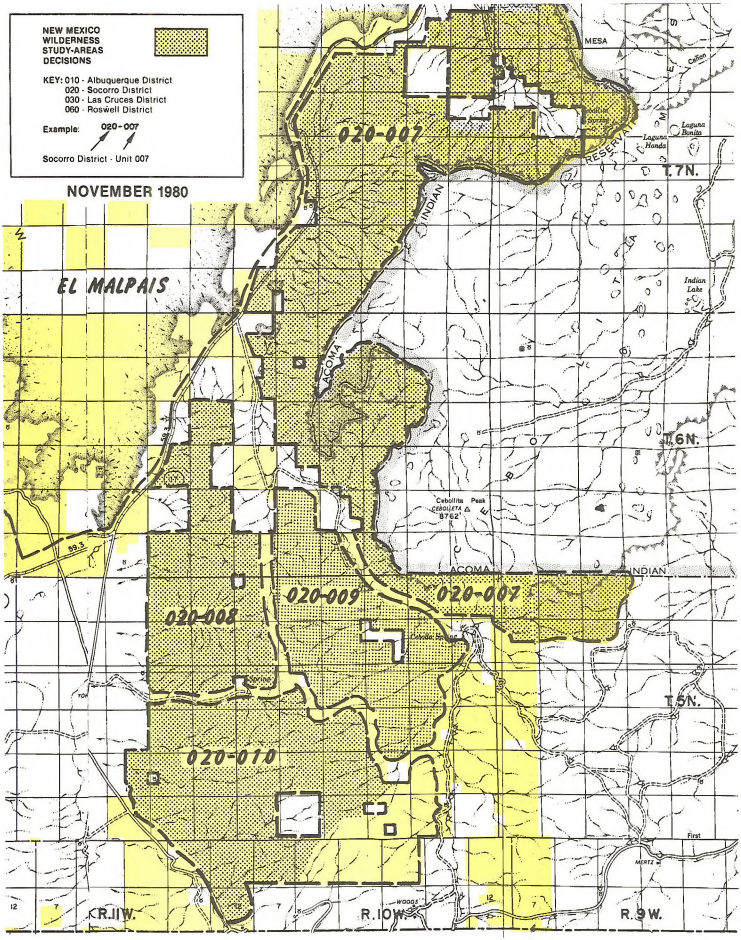
Final WSA Decision

Little Rimrock was nominated for designation as a WSA by the Socorro District. Public comment supported this recommendation (15 individual comments). The reasons cited included the area's size, naturalness, outstanding opportunities for solitude and primitive recreation, and supplemental values.

Opponents to the WSA recommendation concentrated on lack of naturalness due to range improvements and resource conflicts as reasons to delete the area from further wilderness consideration. However, range improvements are few in this unit and well screened by both topography and vegetative cover. Resource conflicts cannot be considered in making a WSA decision.

Two commentors opposing the recommended WSA also suggested Little Rimrock lacked outstanding opportunities for solitude. The BLM cannot agree with this assessment. The Sand Canyon Unit is isolated and its landforms provide a high degree of topographic screening. In addition, the area possesses outstanding recreational opportunities.

Little Rimrock Unit NM-020-009 is designated a WSA as proposed on March 30, 1980.


NEW MEXICO
WILDERNESS
STUDY-AREAS
DECISIONS
KEY: 010 - Albuquerque District
020 - Socorro District
030 - Las Cruces District
060 - Roswell District
Example: 020-007
Socorro District - Unit 007
NOVEMBER 1980
EL MALPAIS
020-007
020-008
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MESA
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Laguna Bonita
Laguna Honda
RESERVA
T.7N.
INDIAN
ACOMA
Indian Lake
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Cebollita Peak
CEBOLLETA
8762
59.3
ACOMA
INDIAN
T.5N.
First
MERTZ
WOODS
R.11W.
R.10W.
R.9W.

Pinyon NM-020-010 Unit Acreage: 13,160
WSA Acreage: 13,160

Unit Description

Pinyon is located approximately thirty-eight air miles southeast of Grants. It is contiguous to both the Sand Canyon (NM-020-008) and Little Rimrock (NM-020-009) units, being separated from those areas only by primitive roads. Pinyon is forested, primarily with old growth pinyon-juniper, but also with stands of ponderosa pine. Elevations range from 7,100 to 8,200 feet. The core of Pinyon is mountainous in character and rugged. A series of sandstone mesas and numerous canyons radiate from the core mountain area.

Wilderness Characteristics

SIZE: 13,160 acres

NATURALNESS: Unit NM-020-010 appears to be affected primarily by the forces of nature with the imprint of man substantially unnoticeable. Human impacts include eight vehicle ways, eight earthen stock tanks, and ten miles of fencing.

OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES: Pinyon possesses outstanding opportunities for solitude. The rugged topography, vegetative screening, and isolation of the unit insure the visitor such an opportunity. Opportunities for the experience of primitive recreation are also outstanding for hiking, backpacking and horseback riding.

SUPPLEMENTAL VALUES: Pinyon possesses significant archaeological resources. Wildlife values are high for raptors, deer, and wild turkey. Mountain lion are known to frequent the area.

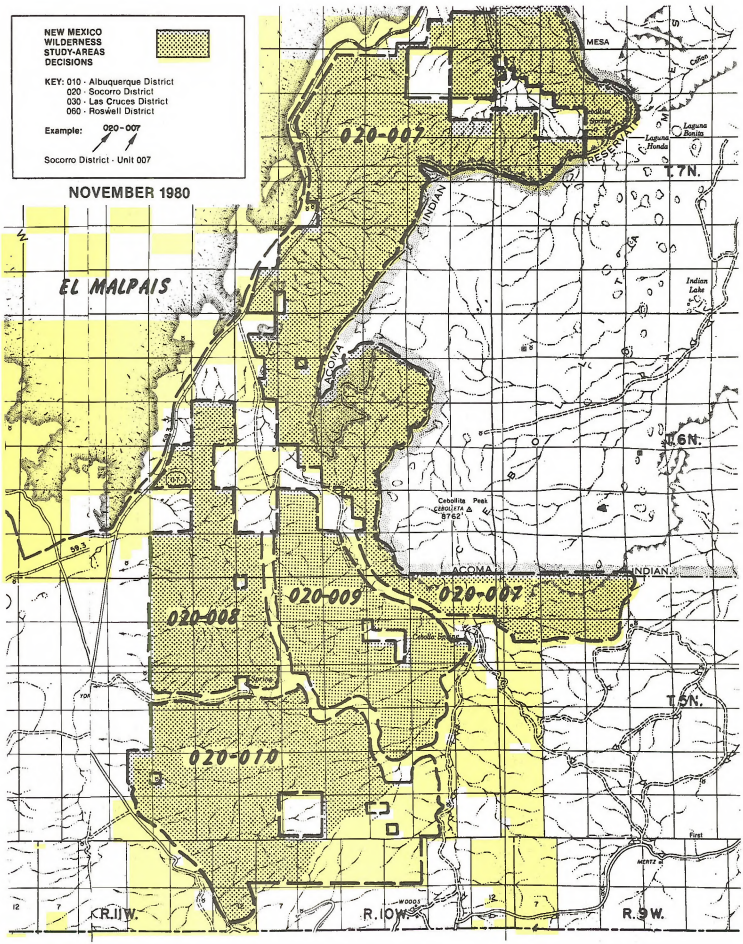
Final WSA Decision

Pinyon was nominated for designation as a WSA by the Socorro District. Public comment supported this recommendation (15 individual commnets). The reasons cited included the area's size, naturalness, outstanding opportunities for solitude and primitive recreation, and supplemental values.

Opponents of the WSA recommendation (7 individual comments) concentrated on lack of naturalness due to range improvements and resource conflicts as reasons to delete the area from further wilderness consideration. However, all range improvements located within the area are well screened by both topography and vegetative cover and resource conflicts cannot be considered in making a WSA decision.

Two commentors denied the area possesses outstanding opportunities for solitude. The BLM cannot agree with this assessment. The Pinyon Unit is isolated and its landforms provide a high degree of topographic screening. In addition, the area possesses outstanding primitive recreation opportunities.

Pinyon Unit NM-020-010 is designated a WSA as proposed on March 30, 1980.


NEW MEXICO
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STUDY-AREAS
DECISIONS
KEY: 010 - Albuquerque District
020 - Socorro District
030 - Las Cruces District
060 - Roswell District
Example: 020-007
Socorro District - Unit 007
NOVEMBER 1980
EL MALPAIS
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MESA
Cañon
Laguna Bonita
Laguna Honda
RESERVATION
INDIAN
ACOMA
Indian Lake
T.7N.
T.6N.
T.5N.
Cebolita Peak
CEBOLITA
8762'
ACOMA
INDIAN
Cebolita Springs
Spring
FOX
First
MERTZ
WOODS
R.11W.
R.10W.
R.9W.

Petaca Pinta NM-020-014 Unit Acreage: 14,800
WSA Acreage: 12,440

Unit Description

Landforms vary from gentle grassland to extremely rugged mesas and canyons. Petaca Pinta Mesa dominates the unit. This isolated mountain-like mesa rises a near-vertical thousand feet above the surrounding land. Blue Water Canyon, in the southwest corner of the unit, is a deep and narrow box canyon of considerable size. Petaca Pinta also contains a maze of smaller box canyons, a badlands environment, and a lava flow on the north. Elevation varies from 5,800 to 7,300 feet. Petaca Pinta is located fifty miles west-southwest of Albuquerque.

Wilderness Characteristics

SIZE: This unit originally contained 14,800 acres. However, it was necessary to delete approximately 2,360 acres from the unit due to the presence of a road. The remaining unit is 12,440 acres in size.

NATURALNESS: Unit NM-020-014 appears to be affected primarily by the forces of nature. The imprint of man is not only substantially unnoticeable, it is virtually non-existent throughout the majority of the unit. The core of Petaca Pinta comes close to being pristine in the literal sense.

Human intrusions include two earthen tanks, two soil stabilization structures, two dim jeep trails, and an impassable jeep trail scar.

OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES: Difficult access and topographic diversity provide an outstanding opportunity for solitude in the unit. Petaca Pinta also possesses outstanding opportunities for primitive and unconfined types of recreation due largely to its scenery, geology and wildlife values.

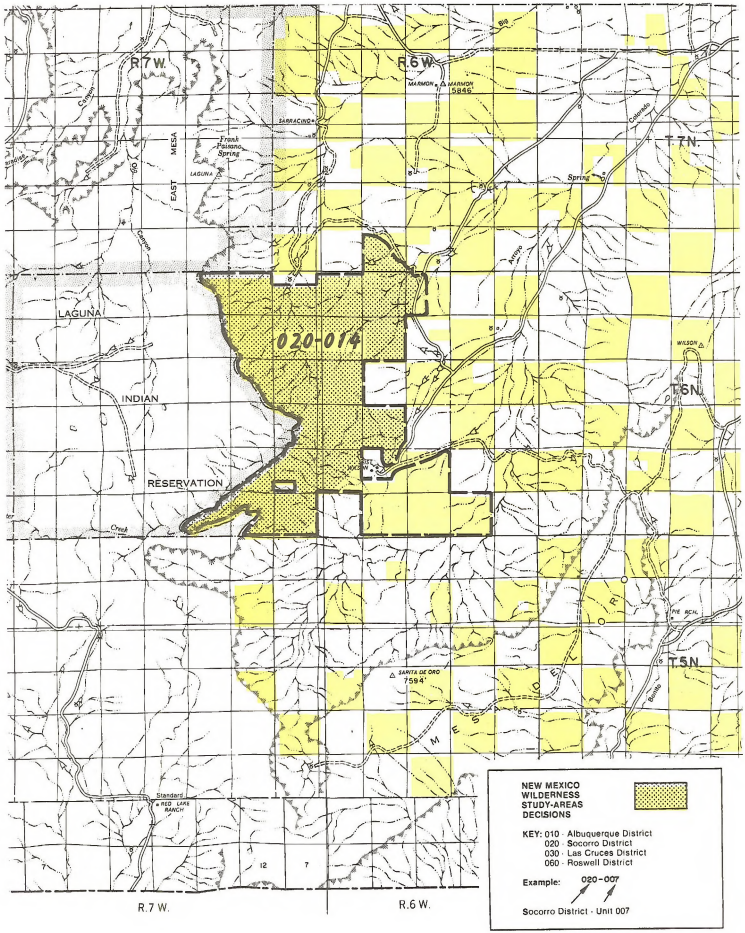
SUPPLEMENTAL VALUES: Petaca Pinta is scenic, possesses striking geological formations, and provides excellent wildlife habitat for raptors.

Final WSA Decision

Petaca Pinta was nominated for designation as a WSA by the Socorro District. Public comment strongly supported this recommendation (16 individual comments) on the basis the area is over 5,000 acres in size, meets the naturalness criteria, offers outstanding opportunities for solitude and primitive recreation, and possesses supplemental values.

The only opposition to the unit (1 comment) came from the Acoma Indian Tribe which maintained Petaca Pinta lacked all of the above characteristics. An affidavit was submitted by the Acomas stating that the tribe regularly maintained the Wilson Ranch road. Since all but a very small portion of this route is located outside the Petaca Pinta Unit, and the portions located within the area are clearly not maintained, no boundary adjustments have been made to the original proposed WSA.

Petaca Pinta Unit NM 020-014 is designated a Wilderness Study Area as proposed on March 30, 1980.



NOVEMBER 1980

Sierra Ladrones NM-020-016 Unit Acreage: 47,400
WSA Acreage: 38,922

Unit Description

The Sierra Ladrones Unit is located twenty-two air miles northwest of Socorro. The unit is generally rugged and broken. It is dominated by Ladrone Mountain, an impressive granitic peak. In addition to its mountainlands, the Sierra Ladrones Unit includes mesas, extensive rimrock formations, rugged canyons and isolated badlands. Elevations range from 5,100 to 9,200 feet.

Wilderness Characteristics

SIZE: 38,922 acres

NATURALNESS: The Sierra Larones Unit generally appears natural and affected primarily by the forces of nature. Human intrusions in this unit include a relatively small number of range developments, seven mining prospect areas, and fourteen vehicle ways. Although the imprint of man is present within the area, the size, extreme topographic relief and vegetative screening greatly mitigate the impact and significance of past human influence.

OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES: The physical isolation, relatively large size, diverse landforms, and great topographic relief, assure the human visitor outstanding opportunities for both solitude and primitive recreation.

SUPPLEMENTAL VALUES: Scenic and wildlife values are significant and the ecological diversity of the unit is scientifically important. Archaeological sites are present within the area.

Final WSA Decision

A large portion of the Sierra Ladrones Unit was nominated for designation as a WSA by the Socorro District. Public comment overwhelmingly supported this recommendation (33 individual comments) on the basis the area is over 5,000 acres in size, meets the naturalness criteria, offers outstanding opportunities for both solitude and primitive recreation, and possesses high supplemental values.

A number of comments (3) were received which opposed WSA status for any part of the Sierra Ladrones. The most consistent objection was the fact the area is not "pristine" and is in fact peppered with "historical" mines. Further field work by BLM personnel confirmed the fact historical mining activity was even more widespread than previously believed. Innumerable shafts and drifts are present in the unit, primarily in the core mountain area. However, with few exceptions, these old mines blend in so well with the surrounding environment they are extremely difficult to locate on the ground even when precise locations are known. Certainly these old mines are not substantially noticeable in the context of the Sierra Ladrones Unit.

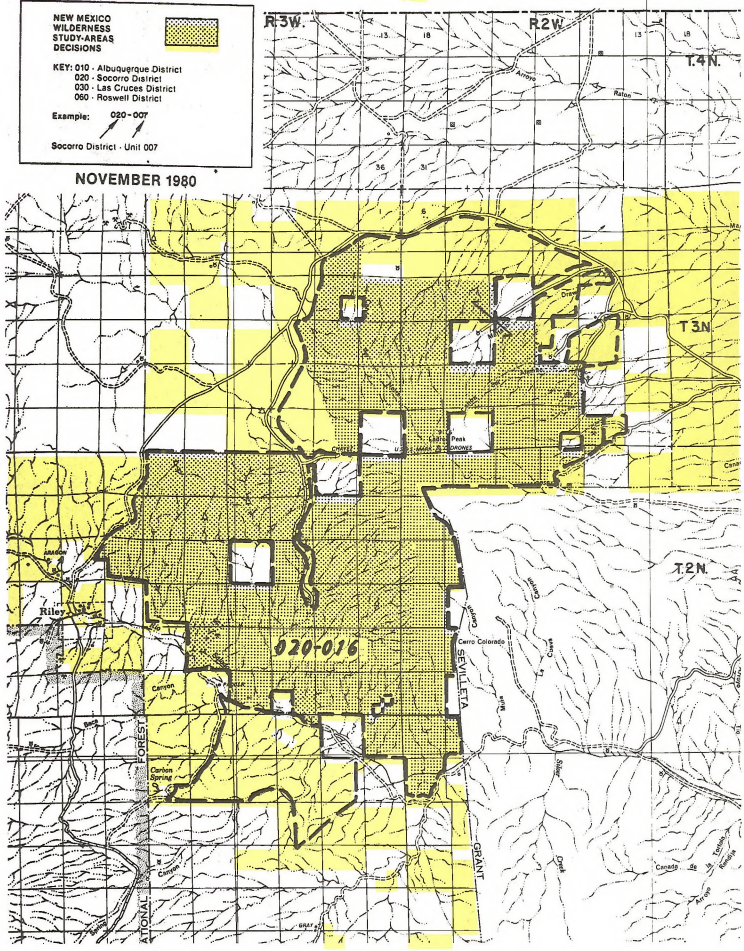
Further opposition was received from a grazing allottee who contended that if the Sierra Ladrone becomes a WSA, his grazing lease would be cancelled by the BLM. This objection is groundless. The Federal land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (FLPMA) specifically mandates that grazing use shall be permitted to continue in wilderness study areas in the same manner and degree as practiced prior to the passage of FLPMA.

Resource conflicts were also cited as a reason for not designating any portion of the Sierra Ladrones Unit a WSA. Resource conflicts, however, cannot be considered by the BLM in arriving at a WSA decision. Such conflicts will be considered during the study phase.

A number of individuals and an informal group requested that the 6,000 acres of the Sierra Ladrones Unit lying south of the Rio Salado not be deleted from the proposed WSA. It was maintained the area in question forms an integral part of the Sierra Ladrones Unit, contains a BLM spring and riparian habitat, and according to BLM Inventory procedures, should be included in the Sierra Ladrones Unit.

Despite the above arguments, the BLM is convinced the Rio Salado forms a logical boundary to the Sierra Ladrones Unit.

Sierra Ladrones Unit NM-020-016 is designated a Wilderness Study Area as proposed on March 30, 1980.


NEW MEXICO
WILDERNESS
STUDY-AREAS
DECISIONS
KEY: 010 - Albuquerque District
020 - Socorro District
030 - Las Cruces District
060 - Roswell District
Example: 020-007
Socorro District - Unit 007
NOVEMBER 1980
R.3W.
R.2W.
T.4N.
T.3N.
T.2N.
Arroyo
Raton
Riley
Cerro Colorado
SEVILLETA
GRANT
FOREST
Carbon Spring
Canyon
020-016

Mesita Blanca NM-020-018 Unit Acreage: 27,000
WSA Acreage: 19,440

Unit Description

Mesita Blanca is located twenty air miles west of Quemado. The unit is flat to rolling grassland broken by isolated sandstone and basaltic mesas characterized by vertical cliffs and broken topography as well as by a large cinder cone (Red Hill) and its lava flow. Canyons are not well developed in this unit. Elevations range from 6,400 to 7,700 feet.

Wilderness Characteristics

SIZE: The intensive inventory of Mesita Blanca indicated approximately 19,460 acres of BLM administered land possessed wilderness characteristics. The remaining 7,560 acres are bisected by the Farmington to Tucson power transmission line and are impacted by significantly noticeable range developments.

NATURALNESS: Approximately 19,460 acres of the Mesita Blanca Unit appear natural and affected primarily by the forces of nature. Human intrusions include ten miles of fencing, five vehicle ways, one small metal drinking tub and three miles of buried plastic tubing, and five earthen tanks.

OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES: The diversity of landforms (lava flows, isolated mesas, rolling grassland) and extreme isolation of this inventory unit afford human visitors an outstanding opportunity for the experience of solitude.

SUPPLEMENTAL VALUES: Wildlife values are high for raptors: golden eagle and prairie falcon nest in the unit. In addition, antelope are common and mule deer present. Red Cone and its lava flow possess high scenic values. Finally, significant archaeological sites are located within the unit.

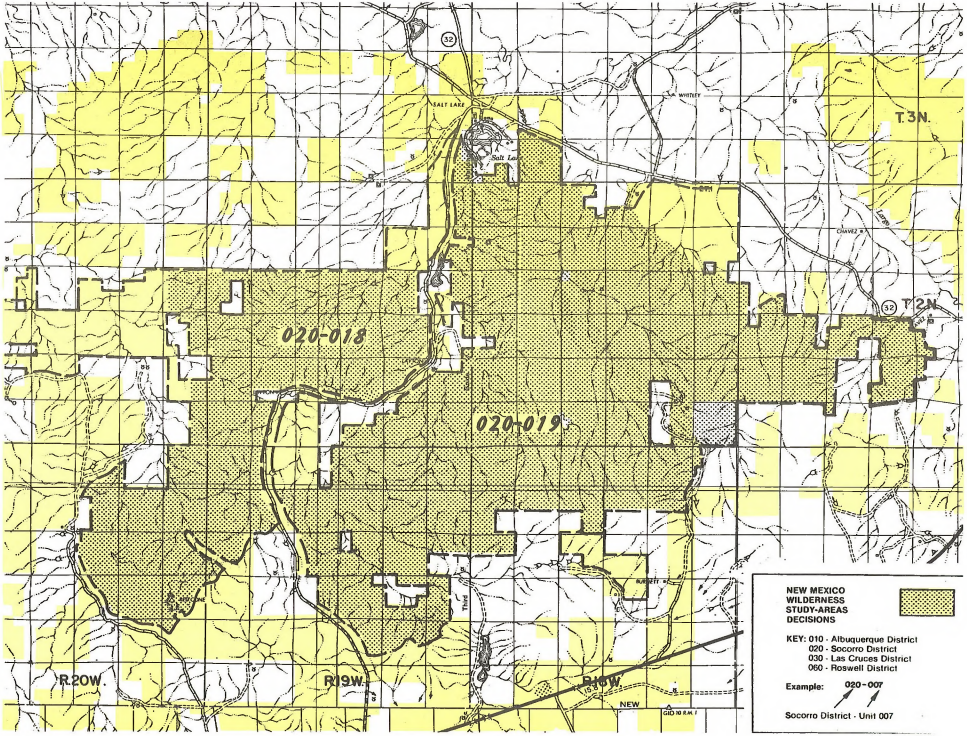
Final WSA Decision

Mesita Blanca was nominated for designation as a WSA by the Socorro District. Public comment strongly supported this recommendation (21 individual comments) on the basis the area is over 5,000 acres in size, meets the naturalness criteria, offers outstanding opportunities for both solitude and primitive recreation, and possesses supplemental values.

Opposition to the Mesita Blanca WSA (5 individual comments) centered on the presence of range impacts in the area. The BLM has acknowledged the presence of these impacts but maintains they are substantially unnoticeable. However, additional field work confirmed that approximately two sections of the unit lying in its northeast corner were unsuitable for inclusion in the WSA.

Resource conflicts were also cited by those objecting to the designation of Mesita Blanca as a WSA. It was indicated that economically recoverable coal deposits may be present and the installation of planned range improvement structures may be hampered by WSA status. The BLM, however, cannot consider resource conflicts in reaching a WSA decision.

Mesita Blanca Unit NM 020-018 is designated a Wilderness Study Area. However, the proposed boundary has been amended to exclude approximately 1,300 acres located on the northeast corner. Total WSA acreage is approximately 19,440.



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R.19W.
R.18W.
SALT LAKE
Salt Lake
WHITLEY
CHAVEZ
Lemo
Third
NEW
GID 10 R.M. 1
020-018
020-019
NEW MEXICO
WILDERNESS
STUDY-AREAS
DECISIONS
KEY: 010 - Albuquerque District
020 - Socorro District
030 - Las Cruces District
060 - Roswell District
Example: 020-007
Socorro District - Unit 007

Eagle Peak NM-020-019 Unit Acreage: 45,200
WSA Acreage: 43,520

Unit Description

This diverse unit contains well-defined canyons, an extensive labyrinth of sandstone and basaltic cliffs, a series of cinder cones, relatively recent lava flows, old growth pinyon-juniper forests and open grassland. One of the cinder cones, Cerro Pomo, is a prominant topographic feature. Elevations range from 6,400 to 7,550 feet. The Eagle Peak Unit is located six air miles west of Quemado.

Wilderness Characteristics

SIZE: 43,520 acres

NATURALNESS: The Eagle Peak Unit appears to have been affected primarily by the forces of nature with the imprint of man substantially unnoticeable. Human intrusions include twenty-eight miles of fencing, fourteen vehicle ways, six earthen tanks, four miles of buried plastic tubing and an associated small metal stock drinker.

OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES: The relatively large size and topographic and vegetative diversity of the Eagle Peak Unit ensures the human visitor outstanding opportunities for solitude and primitive recreation.

SUPPLEMENTAL VALUES: Archaeological resources are significant in the area. Wildlife, paleontological, and scenic values are also present.

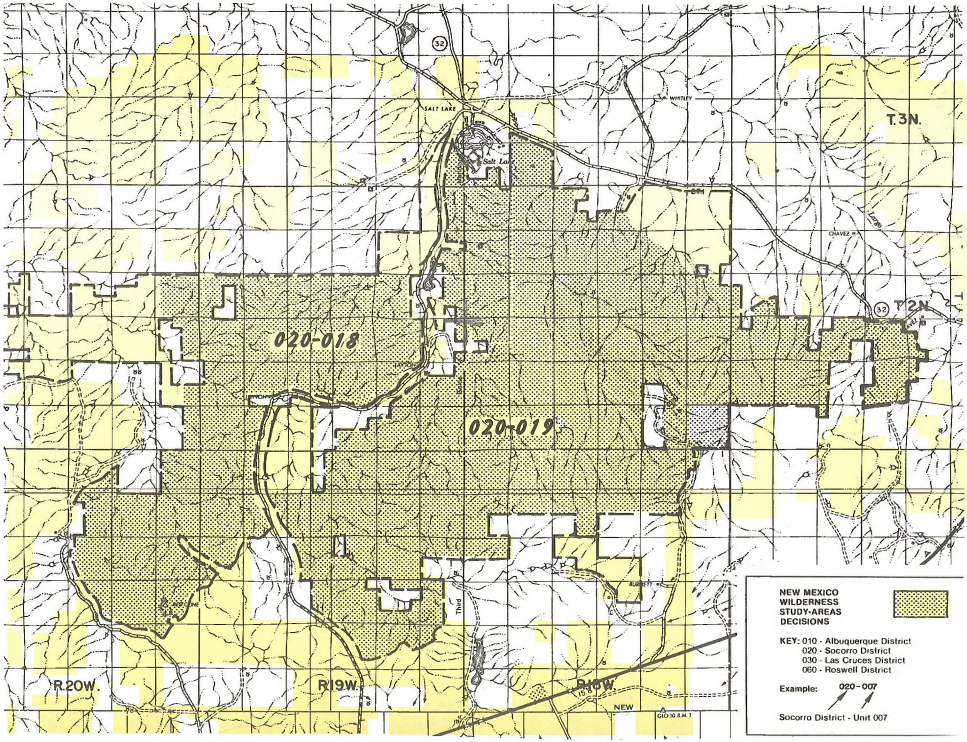
Final WSA Decision

Eagle Peak was nominated for designation as a WSA by the Socorro District. Public comment supported this recommendation (22 individual comments) on the basis the area is over 5,000 acres in size, meets the naturalness criteria, offers outstanding opportunities for both solitude and primitive recreation, and possesses supplemental values.

Opposition to the Eagle Peak WSA (5 individual comments) maintained the area lacked naturalness due to presence of range improvements. The BLM has acknowledged the presence of these impacts but maintains they are substantially unnoticeable within the context of the unit as a whole. No comments were received which altered this judgement.

Resource conflicts were also cited (2 individual comments) by those objecting to this recommended WSA. It was indicated that economically recoverable coal deposits may be present in the area and the installation of planned range improvement structures may be hampered by WSA status. The BLM, however, could not consider resource conflicts in reaching a WSA decision.

Eagle Peak Unit NM 020-019 is designated a Wilderness Study Area.


T.3N.
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SALT LAKE
Salt Lake
CHAVEZ
NEW
NEW MEXICO
WILDERNESS
STUDY-AREAS
DECISIONS
KEY: 010 - Albuquerque District
020 - Socorro District
030 - Las Cruces District
060 - Roswell District
Example: 020-007
Socorro District - Unit 007

Shoemaker NM-020-027B Unit Acreage: 7,760

Unit Description

Shoemaker is located sixteen air miles southwest of Zuni. The topography of the unit can be characterized as typical New Mexico mesa and canyon lands. Elevations range from 7,000 to 7,700 feet within the area. The dominant vegetation is pinyon pine and one-seeded juniper combined with expanses of open grassland in the wide canyon bottom.

Wilderness Characteristics

SIZE: A road is present within Shoemaker which divides it into two areas approximately 3,200 and 4,560 acres in size. Neither portion of the unit meets the size requirement.

NATURALNESS: The imprint of man is substantially unnoticeable within the two roadless areas which comprise the Shoemaker Unit. Human intrusions include one mile of barbed wire fencing, two earthen tanks, and two vehicle ways.

OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES: Shoemaker is comprised of mesa and canyon landforms. Although the elevation range is not great, the profusion of canyons, draws, ridges, and mesas combined with a mature pinyon-juniper forest provide outstanding opportunities for solitude. Recreational opportunities are not considered outstanding.

SUPPLEMENTAL VALUES: Two archaeological sites are present within Shoemaker; the unit also possesses scenic and wildlife values.

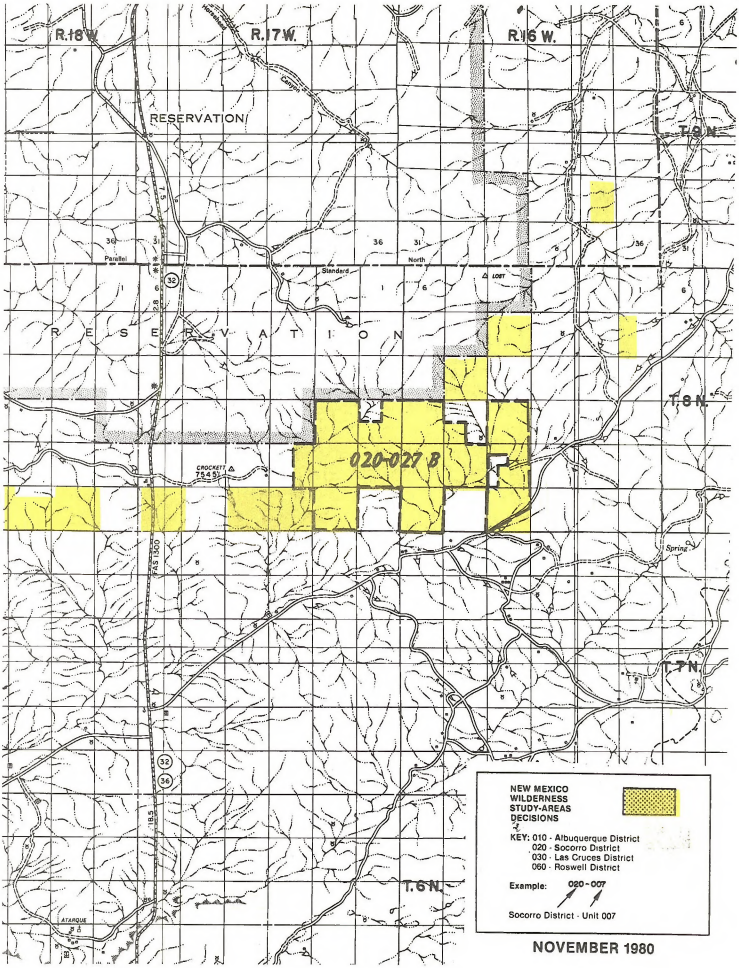
Final WSA Decision

This unit was recommended to be dropped from further wilderness consideration. Six comments were received favoring WSA status for Shoemaker. Three were received supporting the BLM recommendation.

The comments supporting WSA status for Shoemaker stressed its over 5,000 acre unit size. However, no new data was presented which might alter the BLM's judgment that the Showmaker unit was divided into two units less than 5,000 acres in size by the presence of a road.

Two of the comments opposing WSA designation failed to state any reasons for their opposition. One individual, however, supported the BLM contention Shoemaker is divided into two areas less than 5,000 acres in size with photographs depicting the vehicle route in question.

Because no new information has been received since our original recommendation, Shoemaker is dropped from further wilderness consideration.


R.18W.
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RESERVATION
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Parsifel
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WILDERNESS
STUDY-AREAS
DECISIONS
KEY: 010 - Albuquerque District
020 - Socorro District
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Example: 020-007
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Veranito NM-020-035 Unit Acreage: 7,480
WSA Acreage: 7,450

Unit Description

Veranito is located approximately four air miles to the northeast of Socorro. Unit topography is primarily flat to rolling upper Chihuahuan desert cut by shallow arroyos. A series of rugged hills are located on the east. The dominant vegetative type is creosote bush. Veranito also includes approximately one mile of the east bank of the Rio Grande River which provides habitat for riparian tree species such as cottonwood. Elevations range from 4,600 to 5,400 feet.

Wilderness Characteristics

SIZE: Revised acreage estimate for this unit is 7,480 acres. Approximately thirty acres of the unit were dropped due to being crossed by a natural gas pipeline.

NATURALNESS: This unit appears to have been affected primarily by the forces of nature with the imprint of man remaining substantially unnoticeable. The only human impacts include six miles of fencing, two little used vehicle routes, one earthen reservoir, one small metal stock drinker and approximately one mile of associated buried plastic pipe.

OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES: Veranito provides sufficient topographic relief to offer the visitor an outstanding opportunity for solitude. Outstanding recreational opportunities are lacking.

SUPPLEMENTAL VALUES: Archaeological sites are located within the unit. Wildlife values include riparian associated plant and animal species and a small deer herd.

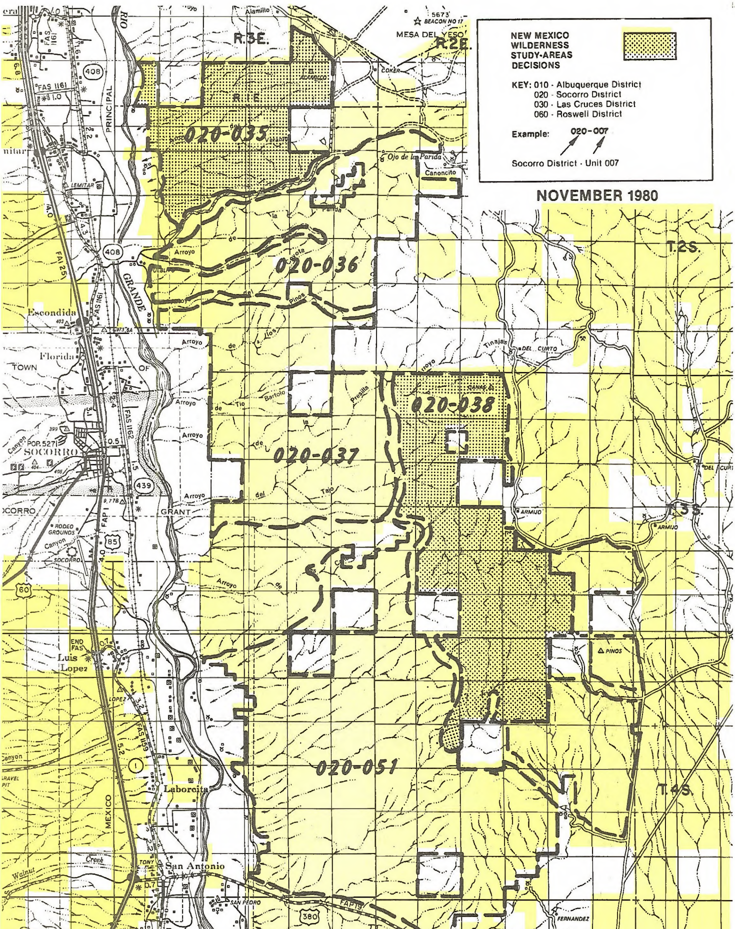
Final WSA Decision

Veranito was nominated for WSA designation by the Socorro District. Public comment generally supported this recommendation (21 individual comments). The primary reasons offered in support of WSA status for Veranito include apparent naturalness, sufficient size, and outstanding opportunities for solitude.

The opponents of WSA status (4 individual comments) cited range impacts as being sufficiently noticeable to render the area unnatural. In addition, one commentor stated the area failed to meet the size criteria and one cited resource conflicts as reason to drop the area from further wilderness consideration.

None of these comments constituted sufficient reason to reverse the BLM WSA recommendation.

Veranito Unit NM 020-035 is designated a WSA as proposed on March 30, 1980.


NEW MEXICO
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030 - Las Cruces District
060 - Roswell District
Example: 020-007
Socorro District - Unit 007
NOVEMBER 1980
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BEACON NO 17
Alamillo
Ojo de la Parida
Canoncito
Parida
Arroyo
Pinos
Tinajas
DEL CURTO
Presilla
Bartolo
Tio
del
Tajo
ARMIJO
PINOS
Escondida
Florida
TOWN
OF
SOCORRO
POP. 5271
GRANT
RODEO GROUNDS
Canyon
LEMITAR
RIO
GRANDE
PRINCIPAL
FAS 1161
FAS 1162
FAI 25
FAP 1
FAS 1159
FAP 19
Luis Lopez
END FAS
LOPEZ
Laborcita
San Antonio
SAN PEDRO
FERNANDEZ
Walnut
Creek
GRAVEL PIT
MEXICO
NEW

Presilla NM-020-037 Unit Acreage: 9,600

Unit Description

Presilla is located east of the Rio Grande River approximately three air miles from Socorro. Elevation varies from 4,600 to 5,450 feet. The area is dominated by high Chihuahuan desert vegetation, most noticeably creosote bush. The topography of Presilla includes vegetation-stabilized sand dunes, steep walled arroyos, rugged north-south trending ridges, and scenic box canyons.

Wilderness Characteristics

SIZE: This unit covers 9,600 acres.

NATURALNESS: Presilla appeared to be affected primarily by the forces of nature prior to road building which occurred between September 1978 and June 1979. Human impacts, prior to FLPMA, included several miles of two-track ways, a few isolated mining prospect pits and four miles of fencing.

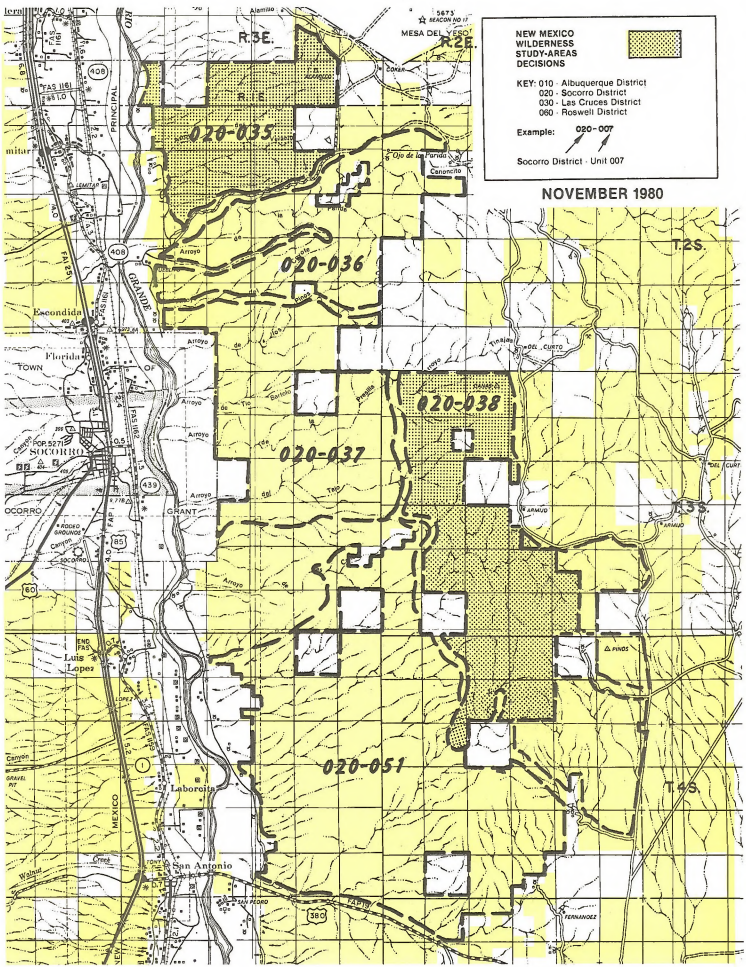
OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES: This unit possesses outstanding opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation. Opportunities for solitude are good.

SUPPLEMENTAL VALUES: An important archaeological site is located in Presilla. In addition, two box canyons which are highly scenic and an undeveloped BLM spring with riparian habitat are present in the unit.

Final WSA Decision

The Socorro District deferred making a recommendation on the Presilla Unit due to the presence of substantial (post-FLPMA) mining impacts. Public comment generally favored WSA designation for the area (11 individual comments). Reasons offered in support included unit size, naturalness, outstanding solitude and recreation opportunities, and high supplemental values. Four comments were received opposing WSA status for Presilla. The two consistent reasons offered in support of this position were the presence of mining impacts and a lack of solitude opportunities.

The Presilla Unit may have possessed wilderness characteristics prior to the construction of five miles of mining access roads in the unit in early 1979 which are considered to disqualify Presilla from WSA designation. However, because these impacts occurred after the passage of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 and because the area possesses unique supplemental values, the BLM will designate a portion of the Presilla Unit the Tinajas ACEC by November 15, 1980. This administrative designation will strive to protect the area's archaeological, riparian, wildlife, and recreational values while permitting compatable resource uses.


NEW MEXICO
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Example: 020-007
Socorro District - Unit 007
NOVEMBER 1980
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020-051
R.3E.
R.2E.
T.2S.
T.3S.
T.4S.
MESA DEL YESO
Ojo de la Parida
Canoncito
Escondida
Florida
SOCORRO
Luis Lopez
Laborcita
San Antonio
PRINCIPAL
GRANDE
MEXICO
GRANT
TOWN
OF
SAN PEDRO
FERNANDEZ
PINOS
ARMIJO
DEL CURTO
Arroyo
Canyon
Creek
Walnut
408
439
85
60
380

Sierra Las Canas NM-020-038 Unit Acreage: 19,000
USA Acreage: 11,000

Unit Description

The unit is dominated by an extremely rugged desert mountain range, the Sierra Las Canas, which is characterized by near vertical sheer rock escarpments and deep narrow canyons. Vegetation ranges from black grama grass and creosote bush through pinyon-juniper. Unit elevation is from 5,100 to 6,200 feet. The area is located approximately seven air miles east of Socorro.

Wilderness Characteristics

SIZE: 11,000 acres

NATURALNESS: The Sierra Las Canas Unit certainly appears to be affected primarily by the forces of nature. All human intrusions are substantially unnoticeable. They include a handful of prospect pits, one earthen tank and approximately four miles of barbed wire fencing.

OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES: This area offers human visitors outstanding opportunities for both solitude and for primitive recreation. The Sierra Las Canas is located in an isolated region and is dominated by a rugged and broken desert mountain range which presents the visitor with an environment of considerable beauty rarely entered by anyone.

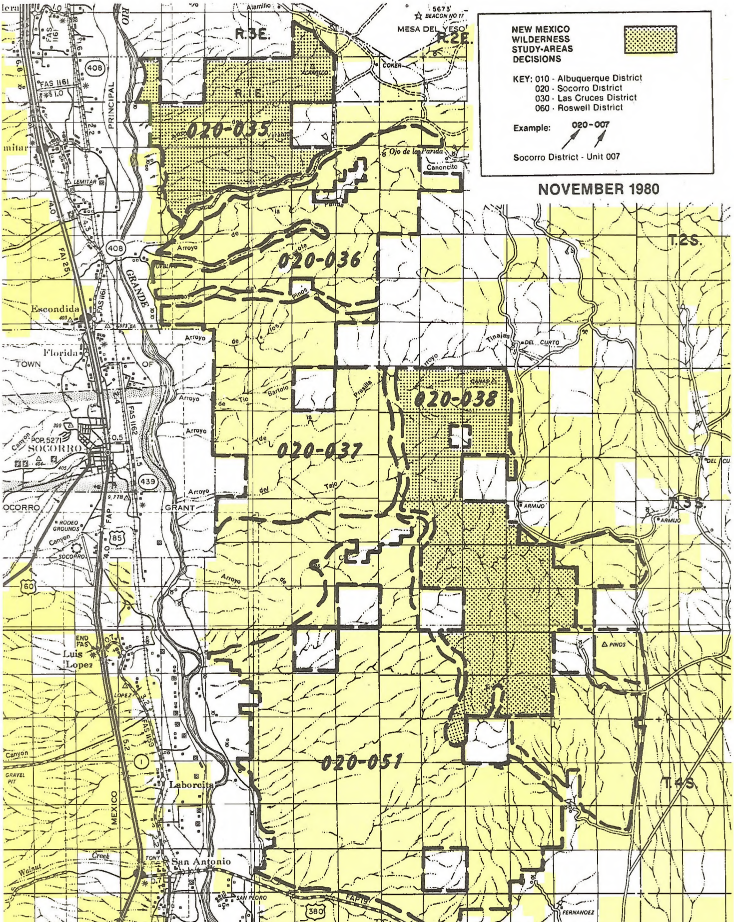
SUPPLEMENTAL VALUES: High wildlife values are present for raptors. Archaeological sites are present within the area, as are high scenic values.

Final WSA Decision

Sierra Las Canas was nominated for WSA designation by the Socorro District. Public comment strongly supported this recommendation (30 individual comments). The primary reasons offered in support of WSA status for Sierra Las Canas included sufficient size, naturalness, outstanding opportunities for solitude and primitive recreation, and high supplemental values.

Opponents of a Sierra Las Canas WSA indicated the area was unsuitable due to the presence of roads, a number of water pipelines and stock drinkers, the presence of metal erosion control structures, and many mining prospect pits. A field survey confirmed the presence of these human impacts. However, they were confined to the southern and eastern shoulder of the unit and involve only 8,000 acres of the 19,000 acre unit.

Sierra Las Canas Unit NM 020-038 is designated a WSA. However, two boundary adjustments have been made which reduce the size of the final WSA to approximately 11,000 acres.


NEW MEXICO
WILDERNESS
STUDY-AREAS
DECISIONS
KEY: 010 - Albuquerque District
020 - Socorro District
030 - Las Cruces District
060 - Roswell District
Example: 020-007
Socorro District - Unit 007
NOVEMBER 1980
020-035
020-036
020-037
020-038
020-051
R.3E.
R.2E.
T.2S.
T.3S.
T.4S.
SOCORRO
Escondida
Florida
Luis Lopez
Laborcita
San Antonio
RIO GRANDE
MESA DEL YESO
Ojo de la Parida
Canoncito
ARMIJO
PINOS
FERNANDEZ
SAN PEDRO

Stallion NM-020-040 Unit Acreage: 42,600
WSA Acreage: 22,000

Unit Description

This is an arid, mountainous unit dominated by sharply eroded, often near vertical escarpments, long north-south trending ridges, and a series of canyons and associated arroyos. Unit elevation ranges from 5,500 to 7,100 feet. The area is located fourteen miles east of Socorro.

Wilderness Characteristics

SIZE: The amended Stallion Unit is 22,000 acres in size; 20,600 acres of the area were deleted from the unit.

NATURALNESS: The Stallion Unit (as amended) appears to be affected primarily by the forces of nature with the imprint of man substantially unnoticeable when considered in the context of the unit as a whole. Human intrusions include three earthen tanks, one windmill, five vehicle routes, seventeen miles of fencing, and approximately fifteen mining prospect pits.

OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES: Outstanding opportunities for solitude are present within the Stallion Unit. Opportunities for a primitive and unconfined type of recreation are outstanding for hiking, backpacking, and horseback riding.

SUPPLEMENTAL VALUES: Stallion includes an escarpment 1,000 vertical feet in height on its east face which is highly scenic. In addition, the area is known to support a small herd of wild horses.

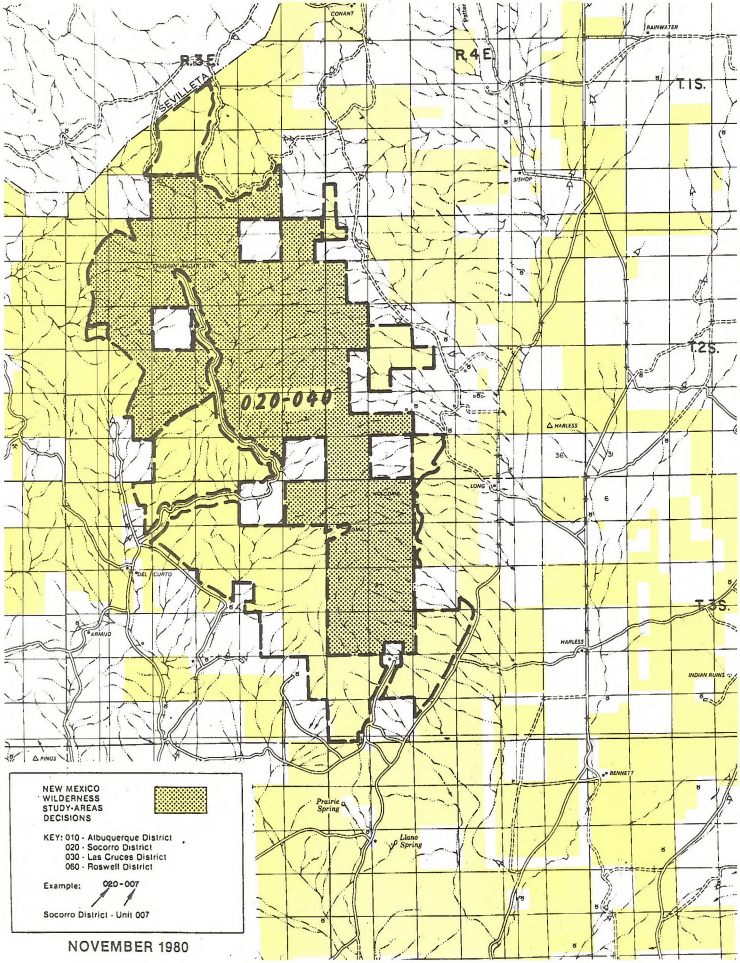
Final WSA Decision

The Stallion Unit was not nominated for WSA designation. This was due to the fact substantially noticeable impacts were known to be present in portions of the area. However, this decision was acknowledged to be a difficult one and public comments on the unit's wilderness characteristics were "especially encouraged" in the WSA Proposal Book. Individual public comments in support of the BLM recommendation to drop Stallion from further wilderness consideration totalled six. The reasons offered included lack of naturalness due to the presence of range improvements, mining impacts, and outside sights and sounds, lack of solitude and recreation opportunities, and resource conflicts.

Individual public comments favoring WSA status for Stallion totalled sixteen. For the most part, these persons requested the entire 42,600 acre unit be designated a WSA. Reasons offered in support of their position included the large size of the area, the naturalness of Stallion, the fact outstanding opportunities for solitude and primitive recreation are present in the area, and high supplemental values (wild horses).

Following the receipt of the above comments, the Socorro District reevaluated Stallion on the ground and determined the core area of the unit to possess wilderness characteristics. Conversely, however, the field work also indicated the remainder of Stallion to be lacking in wilderness characteristics.

The final decision on Stallion Unit NM-020-040 is to drop 20,600 acres from further wilderness consideration and to designate approximately 22,000 acres of the unit the Stallion WSA.


R.3.E.
R.4.E.
T.1.S.
T.2.S.
T.3.S.
020-040
CONVENT
SEVILLETA
RAINWATER
HARLESS
LONG
MUD SPRINGS
CUERVO
KARMUD
INDIAN RUINS
BENNETT
Prairie Spring
Llano Spring
NEW MEXICO WILDERNESS STUDY-AREAS DECISIONS
KEY: 010 - Albuquerque District
020 - Socorro District
030 - Las Cruces District
060 - Roswell District
Example: 020-007
Socorro District - Unit 007
NOVEMBER 1980

Horse Mountain NM-020-043 Unit Acreage: 5,140
WSA Acreage: 5,140

Unit Description

Horse Mountain is an isolated mountain peak rising abruptly out of the Plains of San Augustine. It is characterized by high vertical cliffs, steep and rocky mountain slopes, deep canyons and heavy forest. Interspersed throughout the dominately rugged landforms are small, park-like meadows. Elevations vary from 6,700 to 9,200 feet. The unit is located twenty-five air miles south of Pie Town.

Wilderness Characteristics

SIZE: 5,140 acres.

NATURALNESS: Horse Mountain appears natural with the imprint of man substantially unnoticeable. The only human intrusions are two vehicle access ways which are rarely used and would soon disappear if closed, a number of ponderosa pine stumps which remain from a selective logging operation that took place thirty years ago, and two earthen tanks.

OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES: This unit offers human visitors outstanding opportunities for both solitude and primitive recreation. The extreme topographic relief, diversity of landforms, heavy forest environment and the Unit's physical isolation ensure the presence of such opportunities.

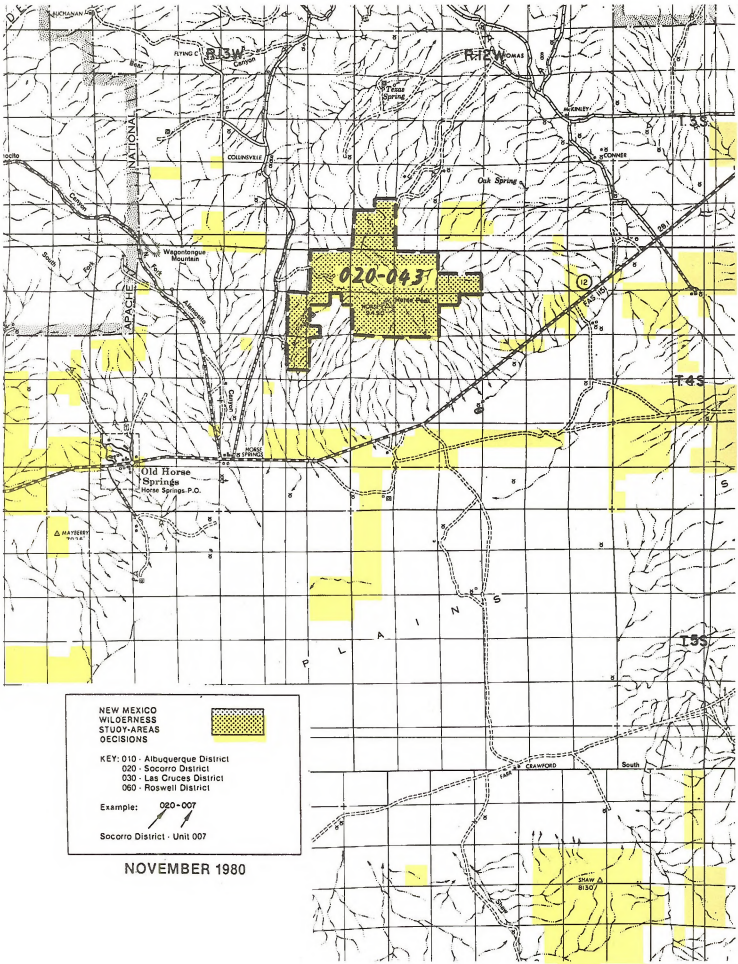
SUPPLEMENTAL VALUES: Horse Mountain is rich in supplemental values. It is highly scenic. Wildlife values are significant for deer, black bear, mountain lion, golden eagle and other raptors. The area also possesses virgin ponderosa pine and mixed conifer forest types at the higher elevations.

Final WSA Decision

Horse Mountain was nominated for WSA designation by the Socorro District. Public comment strongly endorsed this recommendation (27 individual comments). Reasons cited in support of WSA status included sufficient size, naturalness, the presence of outstanding opportunities for the experience of solitude and primitive recreation, and high supplemental values.

Only two comments were received opposing the designation of the Horse Mountain WSA. One commentor indicated a vehicle route in the northern portion of the unit was a maintained road. Field investigation indicated this route to receive little or no use and to be rapidly returning to a state of nature. The commentor also attested that Horse Mountain failed to provide outstanding opportunities for solitude. The second commentor who opposed Horse Mountain offered no reasons in support of his position.

Horse Mountain Unit NM 020-043 is designated a WSA as proposed on March 30, 1980.



NOVEMBER 1980

Continental Divide NM-020-044 Unit Acreage: 73,200
WSA Acreage: 70,000

Unit Description

Continental Divide lies twenty-nine air miles south of Datil. The unit name is derived from the fact the area is bisected by the Continental Divide. Topography ranges from high mountain peaks to rugged canyons to vast expanses of mountain prairie and rolling grassland. The dominant topographic feature is Pelona Mountain which encompasses 50,000 acres and elevations ranging from 6,300 to 9,200 feet. Vegetation varies from rolling prairie to ponderosa and limber pine through aspen and mixed-conifer forest. The southeast corner of the unit is contiguous to the Gila National Forest.

Wilderness Characteristics

SIZE: 70,000 acres.

NATURALNESS: The Continental Divide Unit appears natural and affected primarily by the forces of nature. The only impacts are a number of range improvements, a series of old bulldozer scars (fire breaks and former jeep trails which most often are difficult to even find), rapidly decaying tree stumps, and eight two-track ways.

OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES: The large size, topographic diversity, vegetative screening, considerable beauty, and isolated location of the Continental Divide Unit provide outstanding opportunities for both solitude and primitive recreation.

SUPPLEMENTAL VALUES: This area is highly scenic, provides some of the finest antelope habitat in the Southwest, is mountain lion habitat, and serves as prime winter habitat for bald eagle. The oldest archaeological site indicating the cultivation of maize (corn) in the world is present within the Continental Divide Unit.

Final WSA Decision

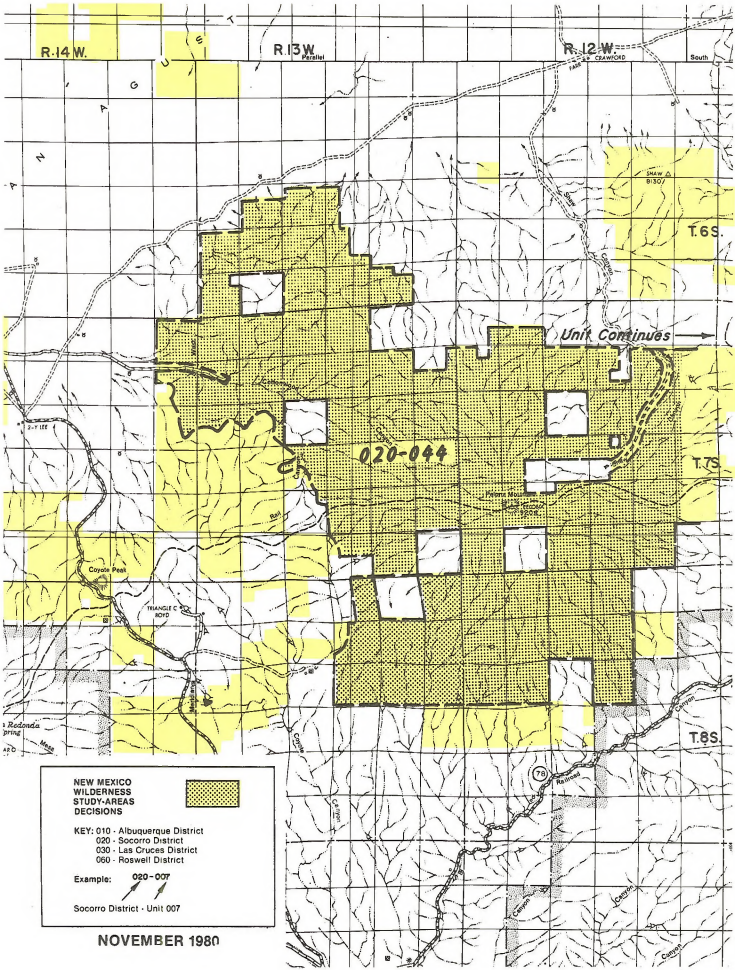
Continental Divide was nominated for WSA designation by the Socorro District. Individual public comments strongly supported this decision (30 individual comments). Reasons offered included the large size of the area, high naturalness values, outstanding opportunities for the experience of solitude and primitive recreation, and its supplemental values.

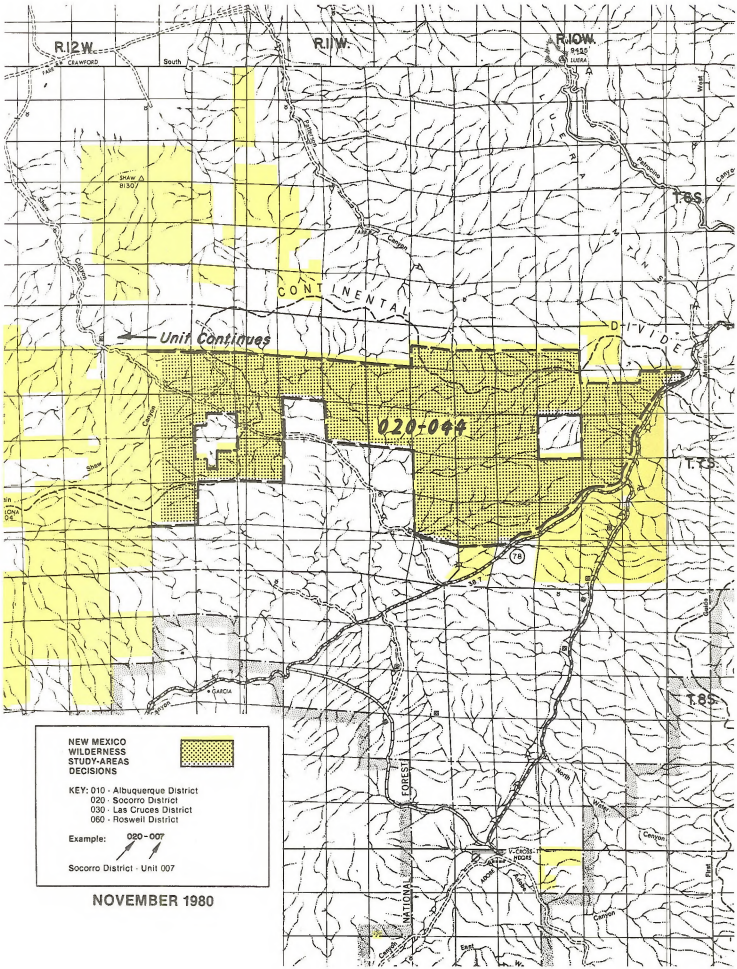
Opposition to the Continental Divide WSA proposal came from the area's grazing allottees. It was maintained that the unit was severely impacted by roads, old logging trails, fire scars, fences, stock tanks, and windmills. The Socorro District Manager and Wilderness Specialist spent a day in the field with one of the allottees reevaluating the unit. The disparity between the BLM and the allottees concerning the non-presence or presence of roads in the area was found to be a matter of interpretation. Whereas the BLM was making a distinction between primitive two-track "ways" and rugged jeep trails, the allottees were calling all routes "roads".

A further problem was the unfamiliarity of the allottees with the "naturalness" criteria of the Wilderness Act. Contrary to the allottee's belief, this law does not require that a land area be pristine to qualify for consideration as wilderness. Rather, the Wilderness Act requires only that a given area "appear" natural.

The opponents to WSA status for the Continental Divide Area did, however, suggest boundary changes which were fully justified. As a result, the boundary of the unit has been amended to exclude approximately 3,200 acres.

Continental Divide Unit NM 020-044 is designated a WSA. However, necessary boundary adjustments reduce the total acreage to 70,000.


R.14 W.
R.13 W.
R.12 W.
T.6 S.
T.7 S.
T.8 S.
Unit Continues
020-044
Coyote Peak
TRIANGLE C RCH
NEW MEXICO WILDERNESS STUDY-AREAS DECISIONS
KEY: 010 - Albuquerque District
020 - Socorro District
030 - Las Cruces District
060 - Roswell District
Example: 020-007
Socorro District - Unit 007
NOVEMBER 1980


R.12W.
R.11W.
R.10W.
T.6S.
T.7S.
T.8S.
CONTINENTAL
DIVIDE
Unit Continues
020-044
NEW MEXICO
WILDERNESS
STUDY AREAS
DECISIONS
KEY: 010 - Albuquerque District
020 - Socorro District
030 - Las Cruces District
060 - Roswell District
Example: 020-007
Socorro District - Unit 007
NOVEMBER 1980

Devil's Backbone	NM-020-047A/B	Unit Acreage (A & B):	10,340
		WSA Acreage A:	8,820
		WSA Acreage B:	860

Unit Description

The Devil's Backbone is appropriately named. It rises abruptly from the surrounding desert grassland to culminate in sharp knife-like ridges and stark, rocky peaks. Elevations range from 5,000 to 8,000 feet. The Devil's Backbone consists of the rugged and broken southern flank of the Magdalena Mountains. The units are contiguous to the Cibola National Forest's Ryan Hill RARE II Unit which is recommended for further planning and is located approximately seventeen miles west of San Antonio.

Wilderness Characteristics

SIZE: 8,820 acres are present in the Devil's Backbone Unit A; 860 acres are present in Unit B.

NATURALNESS: Intrusions within NM-020-047A include seven miles of fencing, three vehicle ways and one earthen tank. However, due to the extreme topographic relief throughout the unit, these intrusions are not substantially noticeable. There are no intrusions in 47B.

OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES: Outstanding opportunities for both solitude and primitive recreation are present in the two units due to their isolation and mountainous character.

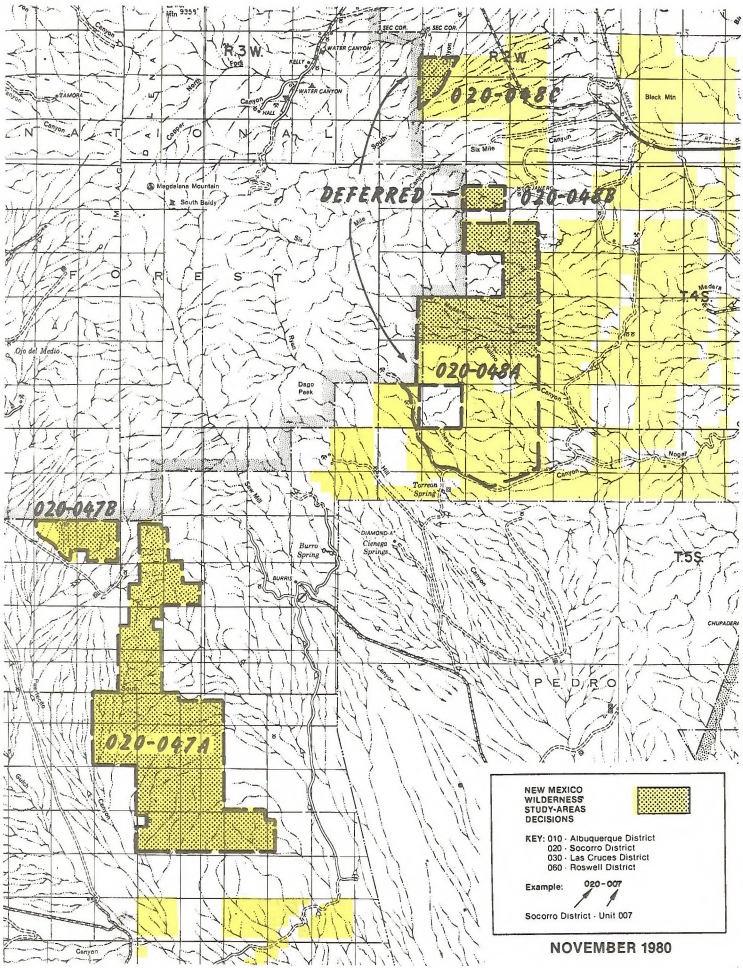
SUPPLEMENTAL VALUES: Scenic values are high. Golden eagles nest in the unit and deer are present.

Final WSA Decision

The Devil's Backbone A/B was nominated for WSA designation by the Socorro District. Individual public comments strongly endorsed this recommendation (25 individual comments). Reasons cited included unit size, naturalness, outstanding opportunities for both solitude and primitive recreation, and supplemental values.

Four comments were received which opposed the Devil's Backbone Unit A/B. The reasons presented in support of dropping the unit from further wilderness consideration were not consistent. Lack of naturalness due to range improvements was cited by several commentors, unmanageability and resource conflicts by still another, and the small size of the area by another. Overall, however, no data was presented which altered the WSA recommendation for the area.

Devil's Backbone Units A/B are designated WSAs as proposed on March 30, 1980.


020-048C
DEFERRED
020-048B
020-048A
020-047B
020-047A
R.3 W.
R.2 W.
T.4 S.
T.5 S.
NATIONAL FOREST
Mt. 9359'
Magdalena Mountain
South Baldy
Black Mtn
Six Mile
Oja del Medio
Dago Peak
Turnesa Spring
Burro Spring
Cienega Springs
DIAMOND A
PEDRO
CHUPADERA
Madera
Nogal
Canyon
NEW MEXICO WILDERNESS STUDY AREAS DECISIONS
KEY: 010 - Albuquerque District
020 - Socorro District
030 - Las Cruces District
060 - Roswell District
Example: 020 - 007
Socorro District - Unit 007
NOVEMBER 1980

Magdalena A, B, and C	NM-020-048A	Unit Acreage A:	8,800
	B	Unit Acreage B:	320
	C	Unit Acreage C:	400
		Deferred	
		Unit Acreage A:	3,640
		Unit Acreage B:	320
		Unit Acreage C:	400

Unit(s) Description

The three Magdalena units are located approximately nine air miles southwest of Socorro and are contiguous to the Ryan Hill RARE II Further Planning Unit on the Cibola National Forest. The units form a portion of the foothills of the Magdalena Mountains. Topography includes rolling grass-covered hills, numerous arroyos, and several large canyons. The dominant vegetative type is grass, but pinyon, juniper, and several species of oak are present. Elevations vary from 5,700 through 7,200 feet.

Wilderness Characteristics

SIZE: Approximately 3,640 acres in NM-020-048A appear to be natural. Units B and C are 320 and 400 acres in size, respectively.

Although the Magdalena units are all less than 5,000 acres in size, they are adjacent to the U.S. Forest Service Ryan Hill Further Planning (RARE II) Unit. Therefore, they meet the BLM's size criteria.

NATURALNESS: Human intrusions within Unit NM-020-048A include two dim vehicle ways which are substantially unnoticeable. The only intrusion within 48B is a dim vehicle way. There are no intrusions in 48C. All three units appear natural.

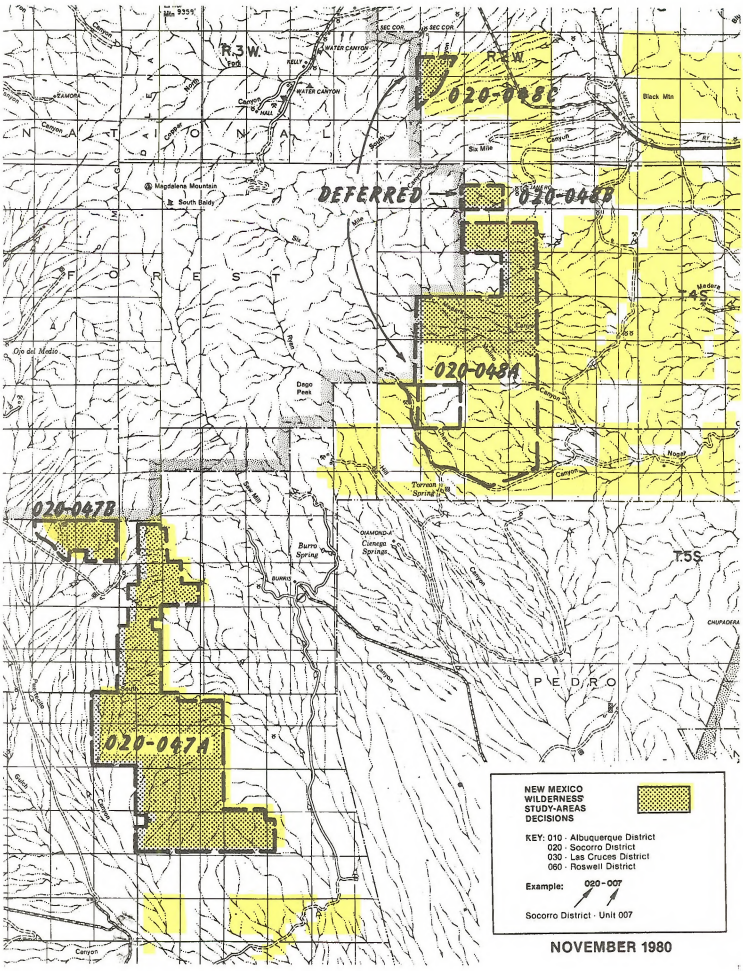
OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES: When considered independent of the Forest Service's Ryan Hill Further Planning (RARE II) Unit, none of the Magdalena areas can be considered to possess outstanding opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation. When considered in combination with Ryan Hill, however, outstanding opportunities for solitude and recreation are present in all three areas.

SUPPLEMENTAL VALUES: Wildlife values are significant in NM-020-048A. Units NM-020-048B and C possess no known supplemental values.

Deferred WSA Decision

The Magdalena Units A/B/C were nominated for WSA designation by the Socorro District. Public comments generally supported this recommendation (15 individual comments). However, the extremely small size of two of the units was indicated by respondents who opposed WSA designation. These persons correctly maintained that none of the Magdalena areas possess wilderness characteristics independent of the Ryan Hill RARE II Area.

The latter comments were considered to be well founded. Therefore, because the fate of the three Magdalena areas as wilderness inventory/study units is dependent upon the disposition of the Ryan Hill RARE II Area, the BLM has decided to defer its WSA decision.


020-048C
DEFERRED
020-048B
020-048A
020-047B
020-047A
R.3 W.
R.2 W.
T.4 S.
T.5 S.
NATIONAL FOREST
Mt. 9355
Magdalena Mountain
South Baldy
Ojo del Medio
Dago Peak
Burro Spring
Cuesgo Springs
Tarwan Spring
Black Mtn
Six Mile
Water Canyon
Kelly
Hall
Kelly Canyon
Hoyt Canyon
Chupadera
PEDRO
NEW MEXICO WILDERNESS STUDY-AREAS DECISIONS
KEY: 010 - Albuquerque District
020 - Socorro District
030 - Las Cruces District
060 - Roswell District
Example: 020-007
Socorro District - Unit 007
NOVEMBER 1980

Padilla NM-020-051 Unit Acreage: 24,800

Unit Description

This unit is located five air miles southeast of Socorro and four air miles northeast of San Antonio. Padilla is dominated by high Chihuahuan desert vegetation. Elevations range from 4,600 to 5,700 feet. Topography varies from nearly flat desert mesas bounded by arroyos of considerable size to large well-developed sand dunes, hills, canyons, and mountain terrain.

Wilderness Characteristics

SIZE: The unit contains 24,800 acres. However, a buried telephone cable, natural gas pipeline, roads, and stock developments reduce Padilla's acreage to approximately 16,000.

NATURALNESS: The central core of Padilla, which is approximately 16,000 acres in size, appears natural. Human intrusions within this portion include only three vehicle ways, three miles of buried plastic tubing, one small drinking tub, and seventeen miles of barbed wire fencing. The remaining 8,800 acres have been significantly impacted by man and appear unnatural.

OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES: This unit lacks both outstanding opportunities for solitude and for primitive and unconfined types of recreation. The majority of Padilla consists of relatively flat desert land cut by occasional steep arroyos. The area fails to provide adequate topographic or vegetative screening for human visitors. In addition, Padilla lacks any outstanding physical features.

SUPPLEMENTAL VALUES: A number of archaeological sites are present within this unit.

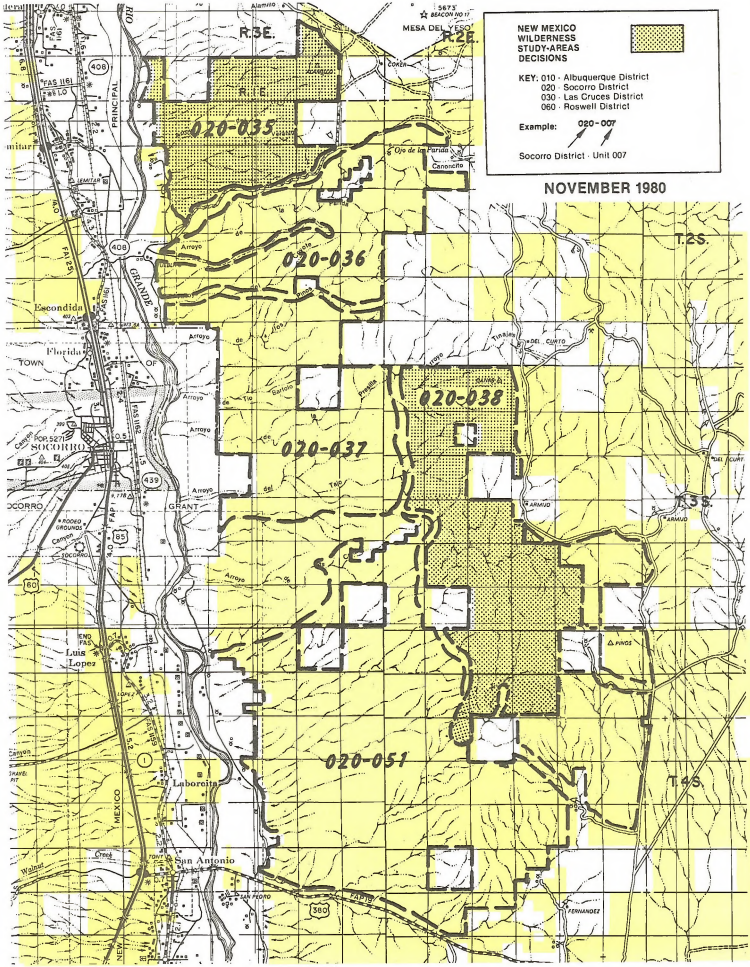
Final WSA Decision

Padilla was not nominated for WSA designation by the Socorro District. Public comments generally supported WSA status for the 16,000 acre core of the unit. Supporting reasons included unit size and naturalness as well as outstanding opportunities for the experience of solitude and primitive recreation.

Four comments were received opposing WSA status for Padilla. No supporting reasons were offered in three of the comments. Resource conflicts were cited in the fourth.

Despite public comments generally favoring WSA status for a portion of Padilla, the BLM does not feel sufficient evidence was presented to alter its earlier recommendation.

Padilla Unit NM-020-051 is dropped from further wilderness consideration.


NEW MEXICO
WILDERNESS
STUDY-AREAS
DECISIONS
KEY: 010 - Albuquerque District
020 - Socorro District
030 - Las Cruces District
060 - Roswell District
Example: 020 - 007
Socorro District - Unit 007
NOVEMBER 1980
020-035
020-036
020-038
020-037
020-051
R3E.
R2E.
T2S.
T3S.
T4S.
MESA DEL ECO
Escondida
Florida
SOCORRO
Luis Lopez
Luboreita
San Antonio
PRINCIPAL
GRANDE
MEXICO
GRANT

Antelope NM-020-053 Unit Acreage: 20,800

Unit Description

This is a rolling desert prairie environment. Elevations range from 4,767 to 5,065 feet. The dominant vegetative type is desert grassland with typical species including black grama, alkali sacaton, sand sage, yucca, and creosote bush. The latter species is present only on the gravelly east slopes of San Pascuale Mountain. The Antelope Unit is contiguous to the Little San Pascuale Wilderness Area located on the Bosque del Apache National Wildlife Refuge. Antelope is located six air miles southeast of San Antonio.

Wilderness Characteristics

SIZE: 20,800 acres

NATURALNESS: Antelope appears to have been affected primarily by the forces of nature with the imprint of man substantially unnoticeable. Intrusions include four miles of barbed wire fencing, three two-track vehicle ways, two small metal drinking tubs, and one small earthen reservoir.

OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES: Unit elevation varies less than three hundred feet over a distance of thirteen miles. In addition, Antelope is elongated in shape, which provides for an area which in one place is only one-forth mile wide. Due to the conspicuous lack of topographic and vegetative screening and the irregular unit boundary, Antelope fails to provide outstanding opportunities for both solitude and primitive recreation.

SUPPLEMENTAL VALUES: The unit is prime antelope and raptor habitat. Primitive recreational opportunities are at best fair.

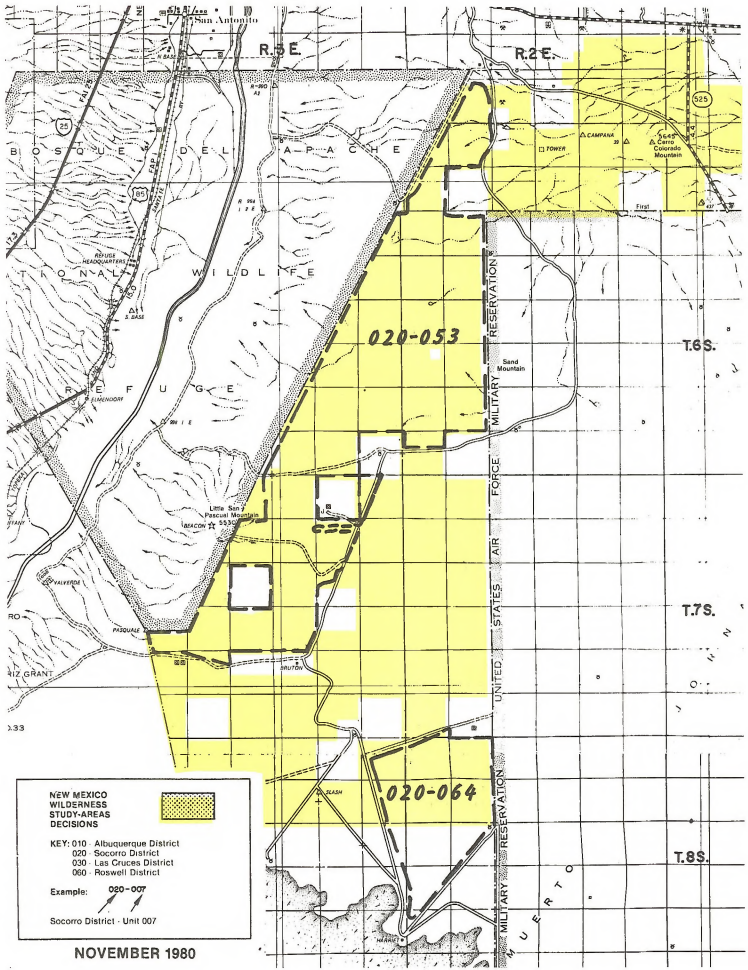
Final WSA Decision

Antelope was nominated for WSA designation by the Socorro District. In terms of numbers alone, individual comments generally favored this recommendation (sixteen). However, these comments were very general in content.

Area-specific comments by two individuals presented specific reasons why Antelope lacks outstanding solitude opportunities. The reasons presented included lack of topographic and vegetative screening afforded by the unit and the area's irregular boundary. Although Antelope provides the experience of extreme isolation in a big, expansive desertland environment, only a small part of the environment being experienced is actually in the Antelope Unit. Furthermore, even if the adjoining Little San Pasquale Wilderness is included, the experience of solitude is still strongly dependent on adjoining non-unit lands.

Although the BLM acknowledges the desirability and need to both study and include in the National Wilderness Preservation System open grassland environments such as Antelope, the BLM believes this particular unit fails to meet the necessary criteria for WSA designation.

Antelope Unit NM-020-053 is dropped from further wilderness consideration.


R.3 E.
R.2 E.
BOSQUE DEL APACHE
NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE
020-053
020-064
UNITED STATES AIR FORCE MILITARY RESERVATION
T.6 S.
T.7 S.
T.8 S.
Sand Mountain
Little San Pascual Mountain
NEW MEXICO WILDERNESS STUDY-AREAS DECISIONS
KEY: 010 - Albuquerque District
020 - Socorro District
030 - Las Cruces District
060 - Roswell District
Example: 020-007
Socorro District - Unit 007
NOVEMBER 1980

Jornada Del Muerto NM-020-055 Unit Acreage: 47,750
WSA Acreage: 28,919

Unit Description

The unit is located twenty-four air miles south of San Antonio within the Jornada Del Muerto. Unit elevation ranges from 4,740 to 4,940 feet. The landscape is dominated by the Jornada lava flow, an aged but broken and rugged volcanic area which is the very essence of the region the Spanish referred to as "the Journey of Death." Vegetation is dominated by various grasses and shrubs typical of the Chihuahuan desert.

Wilderness Characteristics

SIZE: 28,919 acres

NATURALNESS: The Jornada Del Muerto Unit appears natural; it is impacted only by a few miles of fence and an inconspicuous jeep trail.

OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES: The unit contains outstanding opportunities for solitude and primitive and unconfined recreation. The rugged and varied topography of the lava flow provides natural screening between visitors. Outstanding opportunities for hiking, photography, and sightseeing are available in the lava flow.

SUPPLEMENTAL VALUES: The Jornada Del Muerto possesses scenic values. It also provides habitat for various species of bats and raptors, and several herds of antelope.

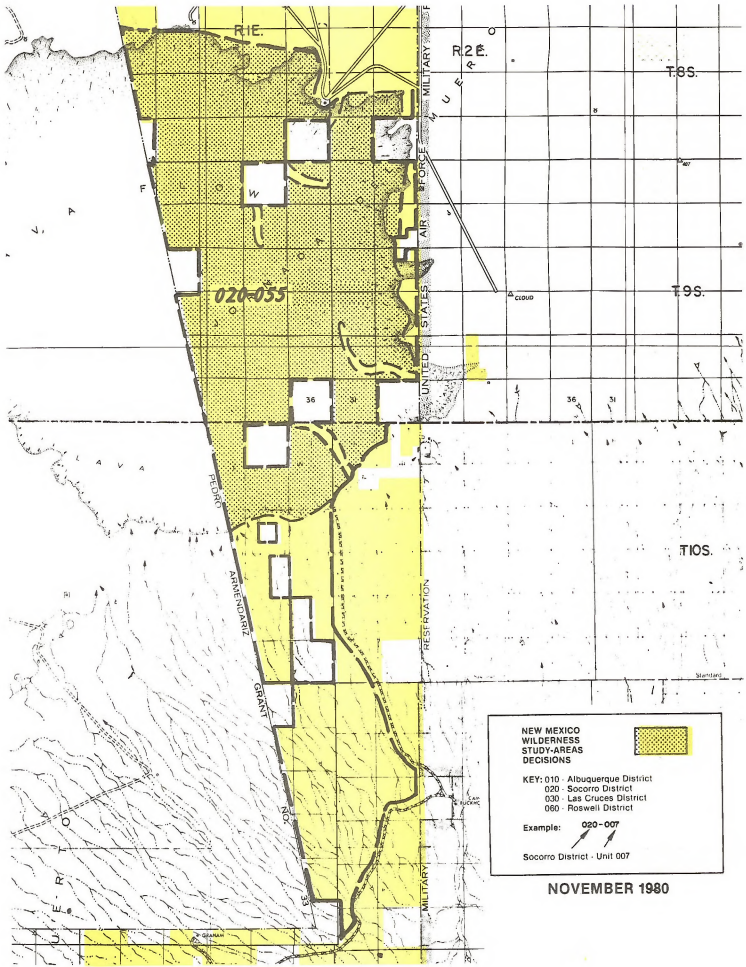
Final WSA Decision

The Jornada Del Muerto Unit was nominated for WSA designation by both the Socorro and Las Cruces Districts. Public comments strongly favored this recommendation (28 individual comments). The reasons offered in support included the size of the area, its naturalness, the outstanding solitude and recreational opportunities and supplemental values.

A number of individuals opposed WSA status for the unit. The most often cited reasons were range impacts and resource conflicts. However, virtually all range improvements have been excluded from the unit and resource conflicts cannot be considered at this time.

One individual opposed the unit on the basis of a lack of solitude opportunities. The BLM cannot agree with this assessment. The Jornada Del Muerto Unit is extremely isolated and its landforms provide a high degree of topographic screening. In addition, the area possesses outstanding recreational opportunities for cross-country hiking and backpacking, as well as for landscape and nature photography.

Jornada Del Muerto Unit NM-020-055 is designated a Wilderness Study Area as proposed on March 30, 1980.


R1E.
R2E.
T.8S.
T.9S.
T10S.
020-055
UNITED STATES AIR FORCE MILITARY
PEDRO ARMENDARIZ GRANT
RESERVATION
MILITARY
CLOUD
NEW MEXICO WILDERNESS STUDY-AREAS DECISIONS
KEY: 010 - Albuquerque District
020 - Socorro District
030 - Las Cruces District
060 - Roswell District
Example: 020-007
Socorro District - Unit 007
NOVEMBER 1980

Lumbre NM-020-056A Unit Acreage: 10,700

Unit Description

Lumbre is located approximately thirty-five miles south-southwest of Socorro. The area is rolling to flat creosote desert cut by numerous shallow arroyos and washes which run east and out of the unit into the floodplain of the Rio Grande River. Elevations range from 4,500 to 4,800 feet.

Wilderness Characteristics

SIZE: Intensive wilderness inventory unit NM-020-056A is 10,700 acres in size. However, the presence of two roads cut the unit into three separate areas, all of which are less than 5,000 acres in size.

NATURALNESS: Small portions of Lumbre appear natural. However, the close proximity of roads to virtually every acre within it combined with the lack of significant topographic relief and vegetative diversity produce an environment which overall appears unnatural.

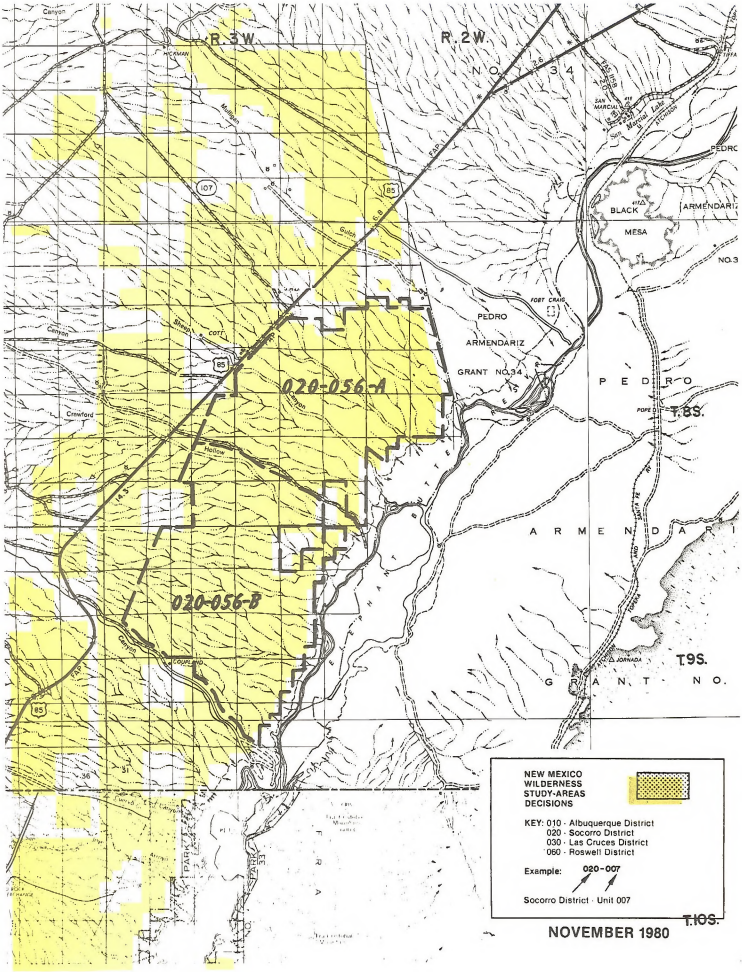
OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES: The close proximity of roads, lack of topographic relief, and monotonous creosote desert environment within this inventory unit fails to provide either an outstanding opportunity for solitude or for recreation.

SUPPLEMENTAL VALUES: Archaeologocal sites may be present within the unit.

Final WSA Decision

The Socorro District did not nominate Lumbre for WSA designation. No comments were received which favored WSA status. Three comments were received supporting the BLM recommendation to drop Lumbre from further wilderness consideration.

Lumbre Unit NM-020-056A is dropped from further wilderness consideration.


R.3W.
R.2W.
020-056-A
020-056-B
PEDRO
ARMENDARIZ
GRANT NO.34
BLACK MESA
NO.3
T.8S.
T9S.
T.10S.
NEW MEXICO WILDERNESS STUDY-AREAS DECISIONS
KEY: 010 - Albuquerque District
020 - Socorro District
030 - Las Cruces District
060 - Roswell District
Example: 020-007
Socorro District - Unit 007
NOVEMBER 1980

Crawford Hollow NM-020-056B Unit Acreage: 12,240

Unit Description

Crawford Hollow is located approximately thirty-two air miles north-northeast of Truth or Consequences. Unit topography is rolling to flat with numerous shallow canyons and washes which drain eastward and out of the unit into the floodplain of the Rio Grande River. The dominant vegetative type is creosote bush. Elevations vary from 4,400 to 4,900 feet.

Wilderness Characteristics

SIZE: Intensive Wilderness Inventory Unit 056B is 12,240 acres in size. However, numerous roads within the unit divide it into a series of areas all less than 5,000 acres in size.

NATURALNESS: Crawford Hollow not only is crisscrossed by many miles of roads and vehicle ways, it contains numerous stock developments. Overall, its appearance is unnatural.

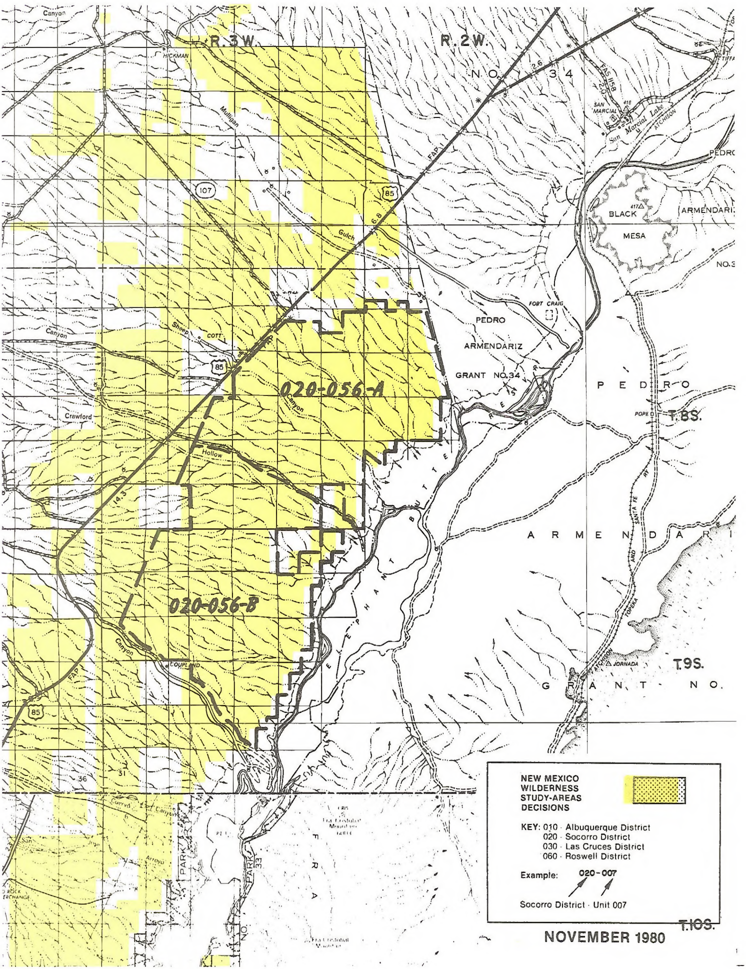
OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES: The presence of numerous human intrusions, lack of topographic relief, and low growing vegetative cover deny visitors both outstanding opportunities for solitude and primitive recreation.

SUPPLEMENTAL VALUES: Archaeological sites may be present within the unit.

Final WSA Decision

The Socorro District did not nominate Crawford Hollow for WSA designation. No comments were received which favored WSA status. Three comments were received supporting the BLM recommendation to drop Crawford Hollow from further wilderness consideration.

Crawford Hollow Unit NM-020-056B is dropped from further wilderness consideration.


R. 3 W.
R. 2 W.
NO. 34
HICKMAN
Mulligan
SAN MARCIAL
San Marcial Lake
ATCHISON
BLACK MESA
ARMENDARIZ
FORT CRAIG
PEDRO ARMENDARIZ GRANT NO. 34
Sheep
Canyon
Crawford
Hollow
Gulch
Canyon
COUPLAND
020-056-A
020-056-B
ELEPHANT BUTTE RESERVOIR
PEDRO
T. 8 S.
ARMENDARIZ
T. 9 S.
GRANT NO.
JORNADA
ATCHISON TOPEKA AND SANTA FE RY
POPE
Cuervo
San
Arroyo
T. 10 S.
NEW MEXICO WILDERNESS STUDY-AREAS DECISIONS
KEY: 010 - Albuquerque District
020 - Socorro District
030 - Las Cruces District
060 - Roswell District
Example: 020-007
Socorro District - Unit 007
NOVEMBER 1980

Canyon NM-020-061 Unit Acreage: 8,300

Unit Description

The Canyon Unit is located thirteen air miles northwest of Monticello. The topography can be characterized as rolling hills broken by unnumerable draws, arroyos, and several large canyons. Elevations range from 6,300 to 7,300 feet. The dominant vegetation is blue grama grassland with scattered stringers of pinyon and juniper. A portion of the Canyon Unit is contiguous to the Gila National Forest.

Wilderness Characteristics

SIZE: Necessary boundary adjustments due to the presence of an electric power line and other nearby impacts reduced the effective inventory unit acreage to approximately 7,800 acres.

NATURALNESS: Overall, the Canyon unit appears natural. Human intrusions include two vehicle ways.

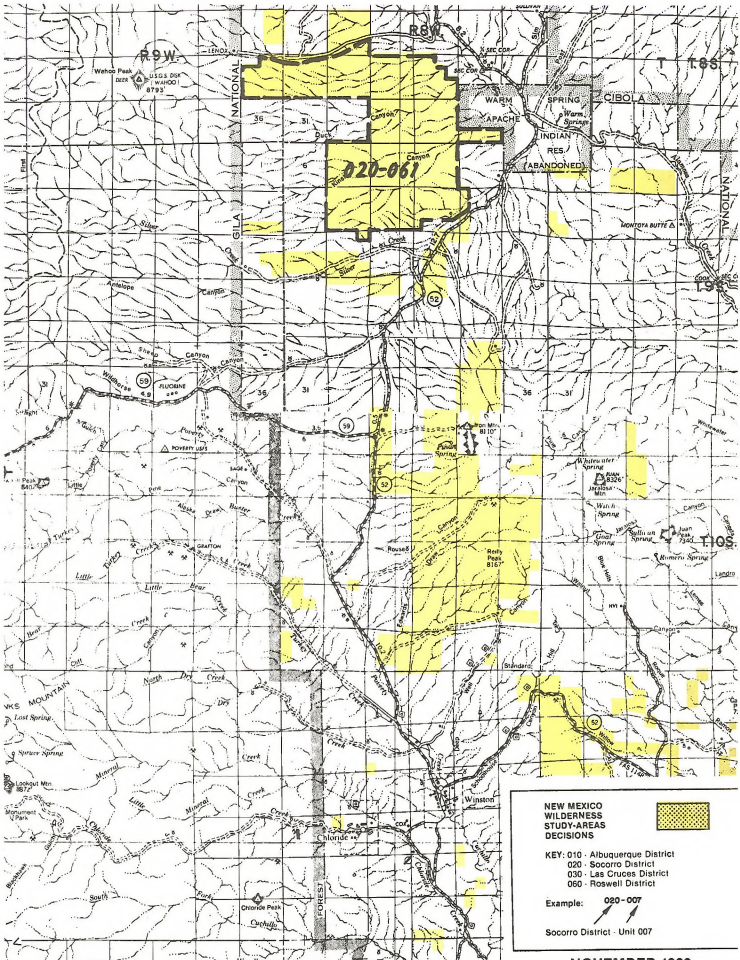
OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES: The grassland vegetation combined with the small size and irregular boundary of the unit produce an area which lacks outstanding opportunities for solitude. The unit also lacks outstanding opportunities for a primitive and unconfined type of recreation.

SUPPLEMENTAL VALUES: Canyon is excellent antelope habitat. Raptors are also abundant.

Final WSA Decision

The Socorro District did not nominate Canyon for WSA designation. No comments were received which favored WSA status. Three comments were received supporting the BLM recommendation to drop Canyon from further wilderness consideration.

Canyon Unit NM-020-061 is dropped from further wilderness consideration.


R9W
R8W
T 16S
T 15S
T 14S
T 13S
020-061
NEW MEXICO WILDERNESS STUDY-AREAS DECISIONS
KEY: 010 - Albuquerque District
020 - Socorro District
030 - Las Cruces District
060 - Roswell District
Example: 020 - 007
Socorro District - Unit 007
NOVEMBER 1980

Big Yucca NM-020-064 Unit Acreage: 5,460

Unit Description

Big Yucca is located twenty-three air miles south of San Antonio. The unit consititutes the extreme northern range of tree-size soaptree yucca (Yucca elata). This species attains heights of 30 feet within the unit. The topography of Big Yucca is flat as is indicated by the uniform elevation range of 4,730 to 4,760 feet. Landforms include desert flats, sand dunes, and sand blow-out areas.

Wilderness Characteristics

SIZE: 5,460 acres

NATURALNESS: Big Yucca appears to have been affected primarily by the forces of nature. The sole human intrusion in this unit is a small metal stock drinker and approximately 1½ miles of associated buried plastic tubing. This impact is substantially unnoticeable.

OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES: Because of the lack of topographic relief, coupled with the unit's relatively small size, outstanding opportunities for solitude do not exist in this unit. It is also felt the area does not possess outstanding opportunities for primitive and unconfined types of recreation.

SUPPLEMENTAL VALUES: The large soap-tree yucca which characterize Big Yucca give the visitor the impression of walking through a forest. This plant species adds considerable aesthetic values to the unit. Wildlife values are high for antelope and raptors.

Final WSA Decision

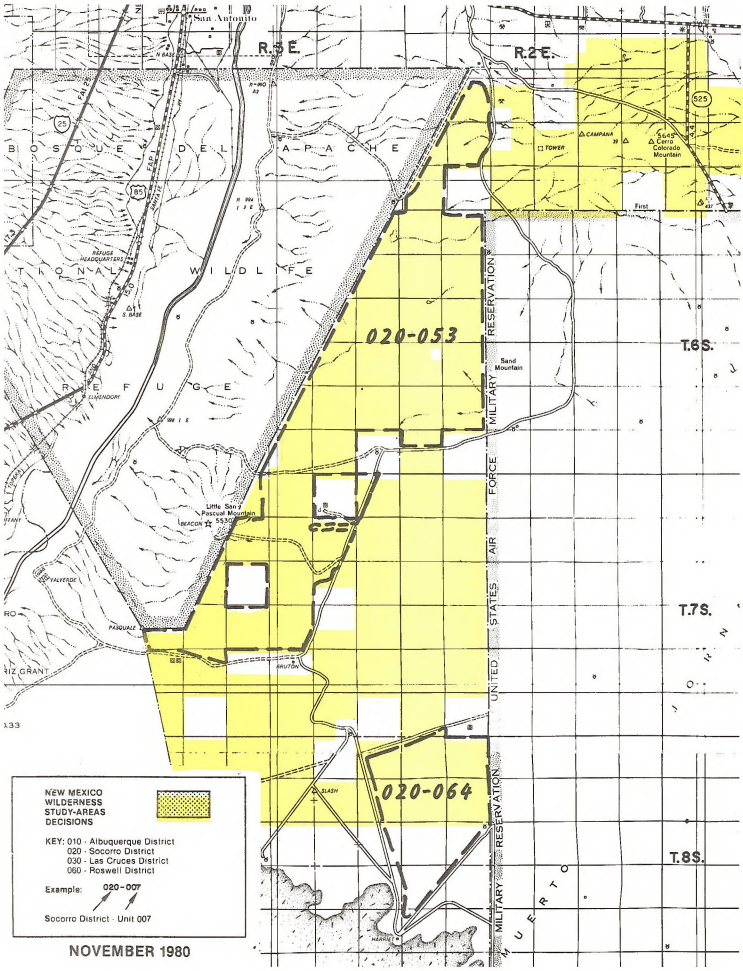
The Socorro District did not recommend Big Yucca for WSA designation. However, public comments generally favored WSA status (12 individual comments). The reasons cited in support of a Big Yucca WSA include the fact it is over 5,000 acres in size, natural, and provides outstanding opportunities for solitude and/or primitive recreation, and possesses high supplemental values.

Three responses were received supporting the BLM recommendation to drop Big Yucca from further wilderness consideration. Two of these responses offered no supporting reasons and one cited resource conflicts.

Despite the fact public comment strongly favors WSA status for this unit, the BLM is unconvinced the area meets the necessary criteria. At the unit's widest point, it is not possible to be more than one and one-half miles from a road when in the unit. Although such a short distance may be acceptable in an area which provides topographic and/or vegetative screening, Big Yucca is flat and open.

Although the unit's large soap-tree yucca provide significant supplemental values, they alone fail to provide an outstanding recreational opportunity.

Big Yucca Unit NM-020-064 is dropped from further wilderness consideration. However, in recognition of the area's high supplemental values, the Socorro District will protect the unit's soap-tree yucca stands by designating all or a portion of this unit on ACEC.


San Antonio
R.5E.
R.2E.
BOSQUE DEL APACHE
NATIONAL WILDLIFE
REFUGE
020-053
020-064
RESERVATION
MILITARY
AIR FORCE
UNITED STATES
T.6S.
T.7S.
T.8S.
Sand Mountain
Little San Pascual Mountain
BEACON
5530
TOWER
CAMPANA
Cerro Colorado Mountain
First
SLASH
HARVEY
PASQUALE
PALVERDE
SUMMERS
NEW MEXICO
WILDERNESS
STUDY-AREAS
DECISIONS
KEY: 010 - Albuquerque District
020 - Socorro District
030 - Las Cruces District
060 - Roswell District
Example: 020-007
Socorro District - Unit 007
NOVEMBER 1980

Offspring NM-020-065 Unit Acreage: 3,600

Unit Description

This unit consists of a relatively flat grassland environment. Although elevation varies from 5,400 to 6,200 feet, the elevational rise is very gradual and extended over a distance of four miles. Offspring is cut by a series of shallow arroyos but they are characterized by almost no change in relief from the surrounding environment. The vegetative type is blue grama grassland. Offspring is located approximately ten miles east of Los Lunas. It is adjacent to the BLM Albuquerque District's Unit NM-010-092 which is in turn contiguous to the Cibola National Forest's Manzano Wilderness.

Wilderness Characteristics

SIZE: This unit is bisected by an existing road which reduces its effective inventory size to 2,710 acres. Although this acreage is less than 5,000, the unit is contiguous to a second BLM unit which is contiguous to an existing wilderness; therefore, Offspring technically meets the size criteria.

NATURALNESS: Offspring does not appear natural. It contains 2,710 acres of open grassland nearly four miles of vehicle ways and five earthen stock tanks.

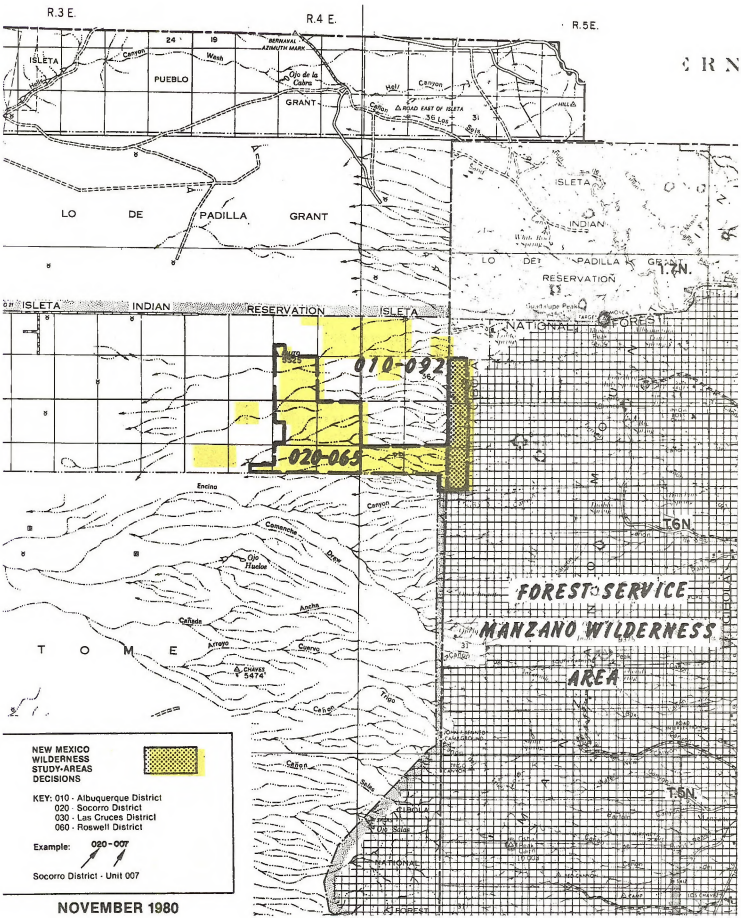
OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES: The lack of topographic and vegetative screening as well as the small size and irregular land status configuration of the Offspring unit preclude the presence of outstanding opportunities for either solitude or primitive recreation.

SUPPLEMENTAL VALUES: None known.

Final WSA Decision

The Socorro District did not nominate Offspring for WSA designation. No comments were received which favored WSA status. One comment was received supporting the BLM recommendation to drop the unit from further wilderness consideration.

Offspring Unit NM-020-065 is dropped from further wilderness consideration.


R.3 E.
R.4 E.
R.5E.
ISLETA
PUEBLO
GRANT
LO DE PADILLA GRANT
ISLETA INDIAN RESERVATION
ISLETA INDIAN RESERVATION
010-092
020-065
T.7N.
T.6N.
T.5N.
FOREST SERVICE
MANZANO WILDERNESS
AREA
T O M E
NEW MEXICO WILDERNESS STUDY-AREAS DECISIONS
KEY: 010 - Albuquerque District
020 - Socorro District
030 - Las Cruces District
060 - Roswell District
Example: 020-007
Socorro District - Unit 007
NOVEMBER 1980

LAS CRUCES DISTRICT

Daniel C. B. Rathbun, District Manager

Rodeo NM-030-001 Unit Acreage: 5,600

Unit Description

This area is located in the Southern Peloncillo Mountains approximately 4 miles NE of Rodeo, New Mexico. Most of the unit consists of steep north and west facing slopes. Small areas of gently sloping to flat terrain are included in the northwest and southwest portions of the unit. Vegetation is sparse and primarily desert shrub.

Wilderness Characteristics

SIZE: This unit contains 5,600 acres of public land. There are no private or state inholdings.

NATURALNESS: The unit lacks naturalness. Imprints of man within the unit include approximately 5 miles of jeep trails, a windmill, 3 dirt tanks, a developed spring, a drinking tub, and shack. These improvements are located in the flats in the northwestern and western parts of the unit. They are neither vegetatively nor topographically screened and are substantially noticeable from the west and NW facing slopes. They cumulatively impact the naturalness of the unit.

OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES: The unit lacks outstanding opportunities for solitude or primitive and unconfined recreation. The constricted configuration of the unit in combination with the lack of any topographic unity causes these opportunities to be less than outstanding.

SUPPLEMENTAL VALUES: There are no known supplemental values within the unit.

Final WSA Decision

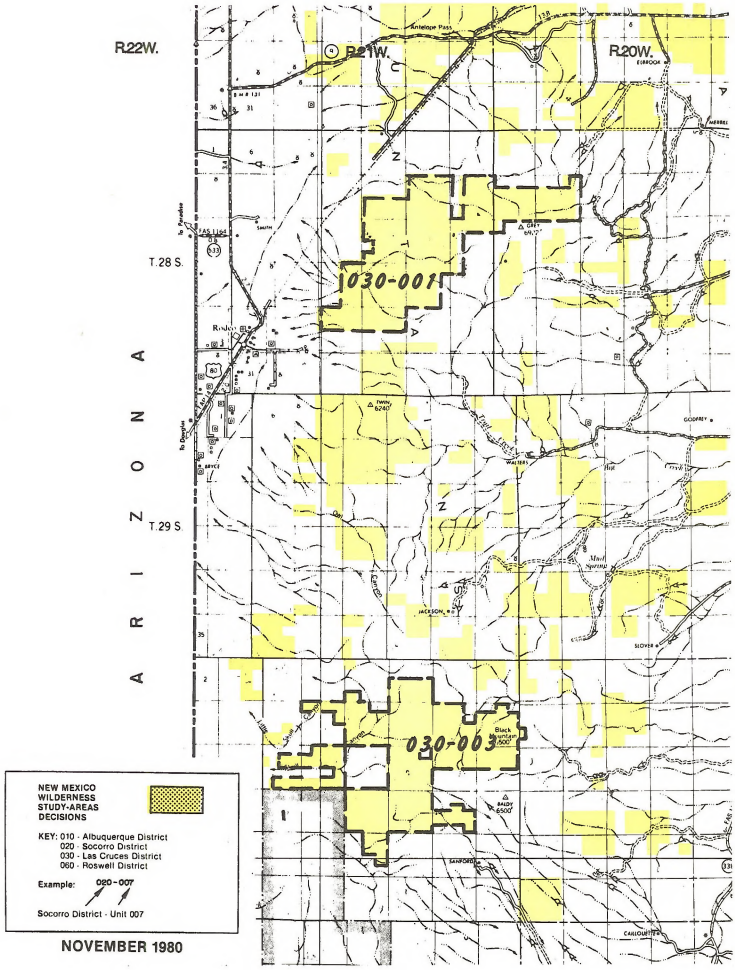
Four personal letters were received opposing WSA status for the Rodeo unit. Range improvements within the unit and the outside sights and sounds of nearby Rodeo, N.M. and Highway 80 were cited as detracting from the naturalness and solitude of the unit. Other characteristics listed as detracting from the unit's wilderness quality included lack of recreation opportunities, the small size and odd shape of the unit, and lack of scenic and supplemental values. These comments are in basic agreement with the BLM's evaluation of the unit's wilderness characteristics. Assessing the effects of sights and sounds outside an inventory unit, however, are generally factors to be considered during wilderness study.

Both the New Mexico Conservationists Wilderness Study Area Proposal and the Las Cruces District Conservationist Proposal endorsed WSA status for the entire 5,600 acre unit.

An additional nine personal letters also supported WSA status for the Rodeo unit. Five of the letters expressed blanket support without listing reasons. The specific comments on naturalness included: "I don't see how there could be any significant intrusions due to its ruggedness." and "imprints of man are substantially unnoticeable, are readily removeable, or will be reverted by nature". Another comment suggested that a boundary adjustment could be made to exclude the windmill from the WSA. Other supporting reasons for WSA designation included outstanding opportunities for solitude and primitive forms of recreation, scenic values, and possible habitat for endangered animal species.

Four people felt the Rodeo unit received an inadequate inventory and expressed the need for more information before they could comment.

The BLM recommended that the Rodeo unit be dropped from further wilderness consideration. The apparent naturalness and opportunities for solitude or primitive forms of recreation are not of wilderness quality due to the size, shape, and topographic makeup of the unit and location of improvements. Since no new inventory information was received during the public review period, the Rodeo unit is dropped from further wilderness consideration.


R22W.
R21W.
R20W.
T.28 S.
T.29 S.
ARIZONA
030-001
030-003
Antelope Pass
Reserve
Pie Town
Datil
Magdalena
Socorro
Alamogordo
Las Cruces
Roswell
NEW MEXICO
WILDERNESS
STUDY-AREAS
DECISIONS
KEY: 010 - Albuquerque District
020 - Socorro District
030 - Las Cruces District
060 - Roswell District
Example: 020-007
Socorro District - Unit 007
NOVEMBER 1980

Black Mountain NM-030-003 Unit Acreage: 6,560

Unit Description

Located in the Southern Peloncillo Mountains approximately ten miles southeast of Rodeo, NM, this unit contains steep mountainous topography with elevations from 5,500 feet to 6,500 feet. Vegetation ranges through piedmont desert grassland, Madrean oak woodlands, interior chaparral, and pinyon-juniper woodlands as the elevation increases.

Wilderness Characteristics

SIZE: A revised estimate showed that the original intensive inventory unit contained 6,480 acres of public land. Boundary adjustments excluded 680 acres of BLM land contiguous to the Coronado National Forest from the inventory unit. This parcel is not contiguous to the rest of unit 030-003 and was included in intensive inventory only because it is contiguous to RARE II roadless area #3-111 allocated for non-wilderness. After boundary adjustment, the unit contains 5,800 acres of public land and 40 acres of private inholdings.

NATURALNESS: This unit appears natural. A jeep trail and dirt tank in the northern part of the unit are presently not maintained and are being allowed to revert to a natural condition. One other stock tank and concrete dam are substantially unnoticeable in the unit as a whole.

OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES: Mountainous terrain and diverse vegetation enhance outstanding opportunities for solitude and primitive and unconfined recreation found in the unit. Limited access into the unit also contributes to outstanding opportunities for solitude.

SUPPLEMENTAL VALUES: The unit contains ecological features of scientific and educational interest. The northern part of the unit includes 2,103 acres of the proposed Central Peloncillo Research Natural Area (RNA). The area has been managed as an RNA since December 6, 1977 pending formal designation in the Federal Register.

Final WSA Decision

The BLM orginally recommended that the Black Mountain intensive inventory unit be designated a Wilderness Study Area (WSA). Public comments were received both in favor of and in opposition to this recommendation.

Both the New Mexico Conservationist Wilderness Study Area Proposal and the Las Cruces District Conservationist Proposal supported WSA status for the Black Mountain unit. Most of the personal letters favoring WSA status for the unit were very general, indicating that the area has wilderness characteristics and supplemental values. More detailed comments addressed the significance of the area's wildlife/ecosystem resources.

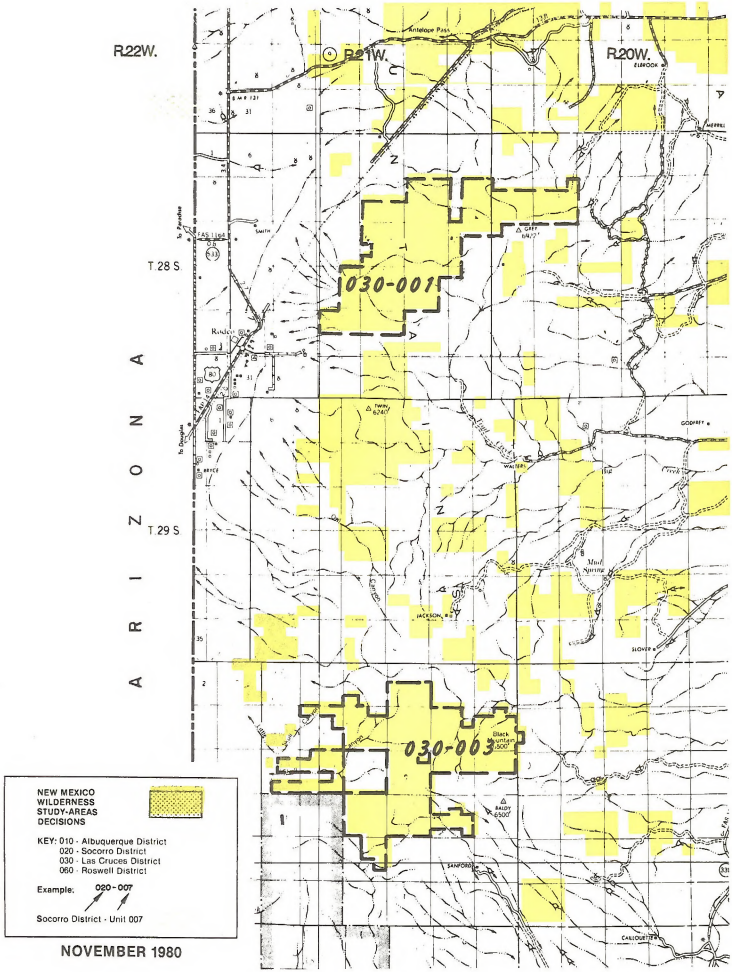
Comments opposing WSA status for the unit identified range improvements as impacts on the area's naturalness. New inventory information was received indicating the existence of several roads which were overlooked in the inventory. A field check and interviews with several local ranchers revealed that the routes were constructed many years ago but have not been maintained. Most can now only be negotiated on horseback or on foot. The routes do not meet the road definition.

Many of the comments opposing WSA status dealt with resource conflicts. Oil and gas potential, the economic effects of a WSA designation on surrounding ranches, and conflicts with the intended purpose and management of the Research Natural Area were listed as reasons against a WSA designation. These types of issues are not considered in the inventory phase of the wilderness review.

The final WSA decision on the Black Mountain unit was difficult. The BLM recognizes the unique values of this part of the Peloncillo Mountains. The proposed RNA was designated as an Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) in September, 1980. The Black Mountain inventory unit also offers outstanding opportunities for solitude.

However, the additional information on acess routes within the area provided during the public review period required a reevaluation of the unit's apparent naturalness. The jeep trails in the unit, especially in the northeast around Black Mountain, are eroding badly and are substantially noticeable. They cannot be rehabilitated by the use of hand tools or by natural processes within a reasonable time span.

Due to the substantial impacts of jeep trails and a few range developments, the natural portion of the Black Mountain unit is less than 5,000 acres in size. Therefore, the unit does not have the requisite wilderness characteristics and is dropped from further wilderness consideration.


R22W.
R21W.
R20W.
T.28 S.
T.29 S.
ARIZONA
030-001
030-003
Antelope Pass
Ruidoso
Mescalero
Mescalero Ridge
Twin Peaks
Walker
Godfrey
Mule Spring
Jackson
Slover
Black Mountain
Bailey
Sanford
Carlsbad
NEW MEXICO
WILDERNESS
STUDY-AREAS
DECISIONS
KEY: 010 - Albuquerque District
020 - Socorro District
030 - Las Cruces District
060 - Roswell District
Example: 020-007
Socorro District - Unit 007
NOVEMBER 1980

Granite Gap (South) NM-030-006 Unit Acreage: 25,860

Unit Description

This unit is located in the Peloncillo Mountains 5 miles NW of Animas, New Mexico, and directly south of Hwy. 80. The terrain is characterized by rugged mountain peaks and ridges dissected by arroyos. The unit includes portions of the San Simon Valley to the west and the Animas Valley to the east. Vegetation is predominately creosote in the lower elevations with grassland-yucca at high elevations.

Wilderness Characteristics

SIZE: A more refined estimate shows that the original Granite Gap inventory unit contained 22,614 acres of public land. Roads identified in intensive inventory through Cowboy Pass and Martin Draw resulted in boundary adjustments which further reduced the size of the unit to 20,044 acres of public land. There are 680 acres of State inholdings and 320 acres of private inholdings.

NATURALNESS: This unit lacks naturalness. Five dirt tanks, a windmill, a steel storage tank, a trough and pipeline, 13 jeep trails, and numerous mining prospects are located in the unit. The dirt tanks and jeep trails are primarily located in major canyons and are substantially noticeable from within the canyons as well as from the peaks. Due to the number and locations of these imprints the apparent naturalness of the unit is cumulatively and negatively impacted.

OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES: The unit lacks outstanding opportunities for solitude and primitive and unconfined recreation. The unit surrounds on three sides the highest and most rugged peaks in the area. This crescent-shaped configuration and lack of topographic integrity in combination with the lack of vegetative screening limit opportunities for solitude or primitive and unconfined recreation.

SUPPLEMENTAL VALUES: There are no known supplemental values within the Granite Gap area.

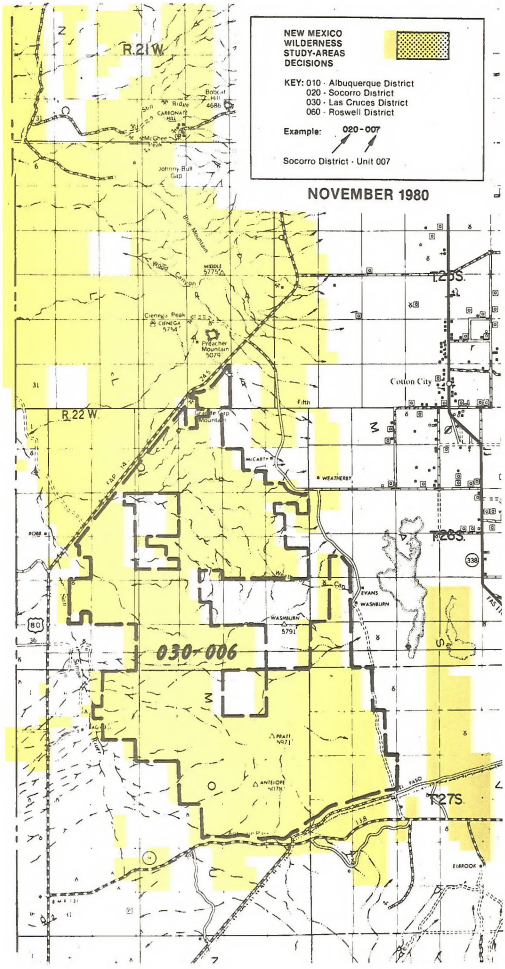
Final WSA Decision

Nine personal letters, in addition to the New Mexico Conservationist WSA Proposal and the Las Cruces District Conservationist Proposal expressed support for WSA status for the Granite Gap inventory unit. Size recommendations varied from 20,044 acres to 25,860 acres and 28,000 acres. Supporting reasons included the naturalness of the area, outstanding opportunities for hiking, nature study, birding, backpacking and outstanding solitude. Threatened and endangered species habitat, archaeological sites, and the area's scenic qualities were listed as supplemental values.

Three comments were received opposing WSA status for the unit. Range improvements, mining activity, and jeep trails were listed as impacts on the unit's apparent naturalness. One comment stated that the area lacks recreational interest and opportunities for solitude due to the scarcity of trees and lack of areas of great topographical interest.

Four people said they needed more information before they could make comments and the unit should be reinventoried for wilderness characteristics.

The BLM recommended that Granite Gap be dropped from further wilderness study based on the unit's lack of naturalness and outstanding opportunities for solitude or primitive forms of recreation. The analysis of public comments revealed no new inventory information. Therefore, the Granite Gap unit is dropped from further wilderness consideration.


NEW MEXICO
WILDERNESS
STUDY-AREAS
DECISIONS
KEY: 010 - Albuquerque District
020 - Socorro District
030 - Las Cruces District
060 - Roswell District
Example: 020-007
Socorro District - Unit 007
NOVEMBER 1980
R.21W.
R.22W.
T.25S.
T.26S.
T.27S.
Cotton City
030-006
WASHBURN
5791
WEATHERBY
EVANS
EILBROOK
Johnny Bull Gap
Preacher Mountain
5076
Cienega Peak
5754
WOODLE
5775
Bobcat Hill
4686
CARBONATE HILL
Ridge
Fifth
McCARTY
ROBB
PRATT
5071
ANTELOPE
5176
Wood Canyon
Wood Mountain
FSRD 14
FSRD 138
338
180

ARIZONA

Cowboy Spring NM-030-007 Unit Acreage: 6,880
WSA Acreage: 6,710

Unit Description

This unit is located in the central part of the Animas Mountains, 25 air miles southeast of Animas, New Mexico. The unit is characterized by rugged mountainous topography and deeply cut canyons. A 6000 ft. ridge trends N-S through the central portion of the unit. Vegetation is primarily grasses, yucca, and cholla with scattered oak-juniper woodlands at higher elevations.

Wilderness Characteristics

SIZE: A revised estimate of the original intensive inventory acreage showed that the unit contains 6,920 acres of public land. There are no private or state inholdings.

NATURALNESS: The unit generally appears natural. Approximately 2 miles of jeep trail enter the unit on the west and east but their cumulative impacts are not substantially noticeable in the unit as a whole.

OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES: The unit contains outstanding opportunities for solitude and primitive and unconfined recreation. The unit is very remote and rugged. The topography provides ample screening for solitude. Most of the unit is accessible only by foot or horseback.

SUPPLEMENTAL VALUES: The unit has high scenic values.

Final WSA Decision

The BLM recommended that 6,920 acres of the Cowboy Springs Intensive Inventory unit become a Wilderness Study Area. Public comments were received both in favor and in opposition to the BLM recommendation.

Comments opposing WSA status cited existing unpatented mining claims and proximity to existing developments as impacts on the naturalness of the unit. Other comments dealt with resource and management conflicts such as visitor vs. rancher, oil and gas potential, and conflicts with the Clean Air Act. Another comment indicated the area was not unique and that the site write up had overstated the opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation. Additional comments indicated that outstanding opportunities for solitude or primitive and unconfined recreation were not present.

New inventory information was received in the form of an affidavit stating that the access routes in the NW portion of the unit had been maintained during the last 36 years. A field check confirmed the improvement and maintenance of the routes. The decision that these routes are roads resulted in a reduction of 210 acres.

No other additional inventory information was received. Most opposition was in the form of blanket disagreement with BLM WSA proposals.

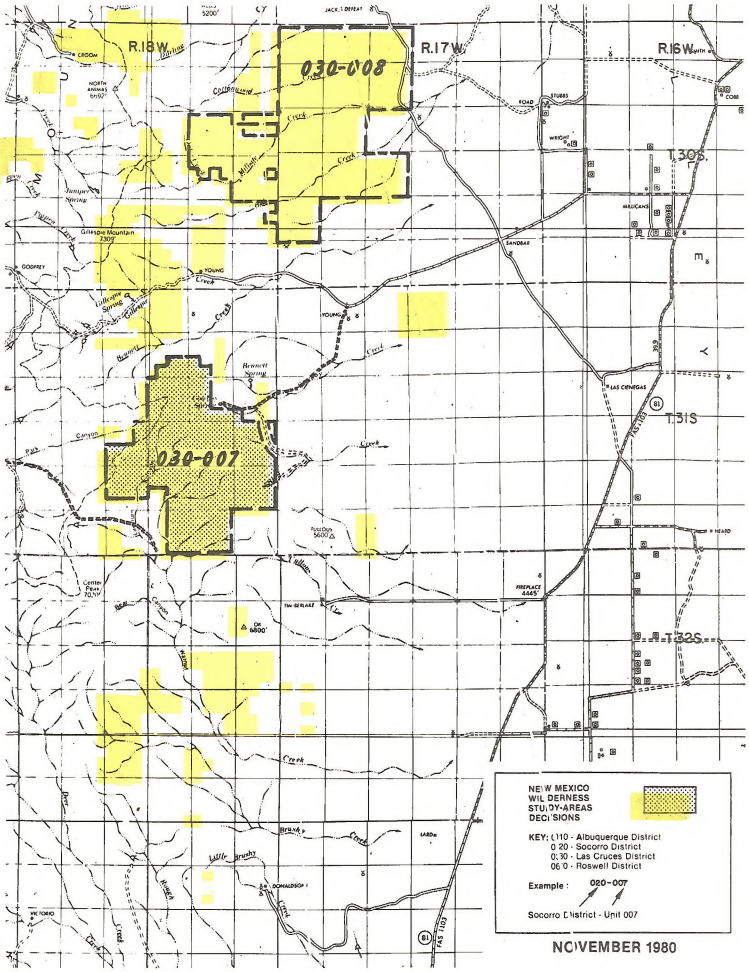
Both the New Mexico Conservationist Wilderness Study Area Proposal and the Las Cruces District Conservationist Proposal support WSA status for the Cowboy Spring Unit.

Several individual comments were submitted which indicated the unit offered solitude because of its remoteness and offered outstanding recreation opportunities because of its ruggedness. One comment was made that the Animas Mountains are nationally significant in wildlife and ecosystem resources. Several people identified the supplemental values of scenery and ecosystem relationships in support of the WSA status.

After a careful evaluation of the relevant public comments, field checks of new information, and further analysis of intensive inventory information, the BLM still considers the Cowboy Spring unit as having wilderness characteristics. The roads identified through the comment period resulted in a reduction of 210 acres from the WSA.

The comments received which identified resource conflicts will be retained and used during the study phase of the wilderness process.

The Cowboy Spring Unit is now a Wilderness Study Area.


R.18W.
R.17W.
R.16W.
T.30S.
T.31S
T.32S.
030-008
030-007
Gillespie Mountain
7309'
Center Peak
7076'
Peak
6800'
Peak
5600'
Peak
6445'
Peak
6402'
Peak
5200'
NEW MEXICO
WILDERNESS
STUDY-AREAS
DECISIONS
KEY: (110 - Albuquerque District
020 - Socorro District
030 - Las Cruces District
060 - Roswell District
Example : 020-007
Socorro District - Unit 007
NOVEMBER 1980

Millsite Creek NM-030-008 Unit Acreage: 9,720

Unit Description

This unit is located 22 air miles SE of Animas, New Mexico, along the eastern edge of the central Animas Mountains. A steep 5700 foot ridge forms the western boundary of the unit. The remainder of the unit covers gently sloping foothills and flats. Vegetation consists of mixed desert shrub, mesquite, and grasses.

Wilderness Characteristics

SIZE: This unit contains 9,440 acres of public land and 40 acres of state inholdings. Boundary adjustment to exclude a road in the NE corner of the unit deleted 280 acres from the original intensive inventory unit.

NATURALNESS: The unit generally appears natural. The abandoned Red Hill Mine is in the southern part of the unit and a jeep trail runs E-W along a fenceline through the center of the unit. However, the cumulative impacts are not substantially noticeable in the unit as a whole.

OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES: The unit lacks outstanding opportunities for solitude or primitive and unconfined recreation. The lack of vegetative and topographic screening coupled with the nearness (less than 5 miles) of the Phelps-Dodge Hidalgo Copper Smelter diminish opportunities to avoid the sights and sounds of man to less than outstanding. The operations of the smelter can be heard throughout most of the unit.

SUPPLEMENTAL VALUES: There are no known supplemental values within the Millsite Creek unit.

Final WSA Decision

The BLM recommended that the Millsite Creek Unit be dropped from further wilderness review. Public comments received on this unit were both in favor and in opposition to this recommendation.

It appears that the four individuals who felt several other non-recommended units needed to be re-inventoried also felt that this unit should be re-inventoried. They all refer to unit 007-Millsite Creek in their lists of areas which received inadequate inventory and that more information was required before they could make comments. It is assumed that 008-Millsite Creek is what was intended.

Comments opposing WSA status cited previous mining activity and the proximity to the Phelps-Dodge Corporation's Hidalgo Copper Smelter as significant imprints of man upon this unit. Most of the opposing comments centered on the lack of outstanding opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation and solitude due to the lack of topography and vegetative screening and the nearness to the Hidalgo Copper Smelter.

Both the New Mexico Conservationist Wilderness Study Area proposal and the Las Cruces District Conservationist Proposal support WSA status for the Millsite Creek unit. The acreage in these proposals is 9,720 acres.

New inventory information, in the form of a site write up and pictures was submitted for this unit. This report indicated that the Hidalgo Smelter was not a significant impact on the unit.

Three comments were received suggesting an increase in acreage for the Millsite Creek Unit. The total acreages suggested were 10,000, 12,000 and 25,860 acres. A recheck of the master title plats showed that there are 9,720 acres of contiguous Federal land in this area, 9,440 acres of which is roadless as was reported in the original inventory.

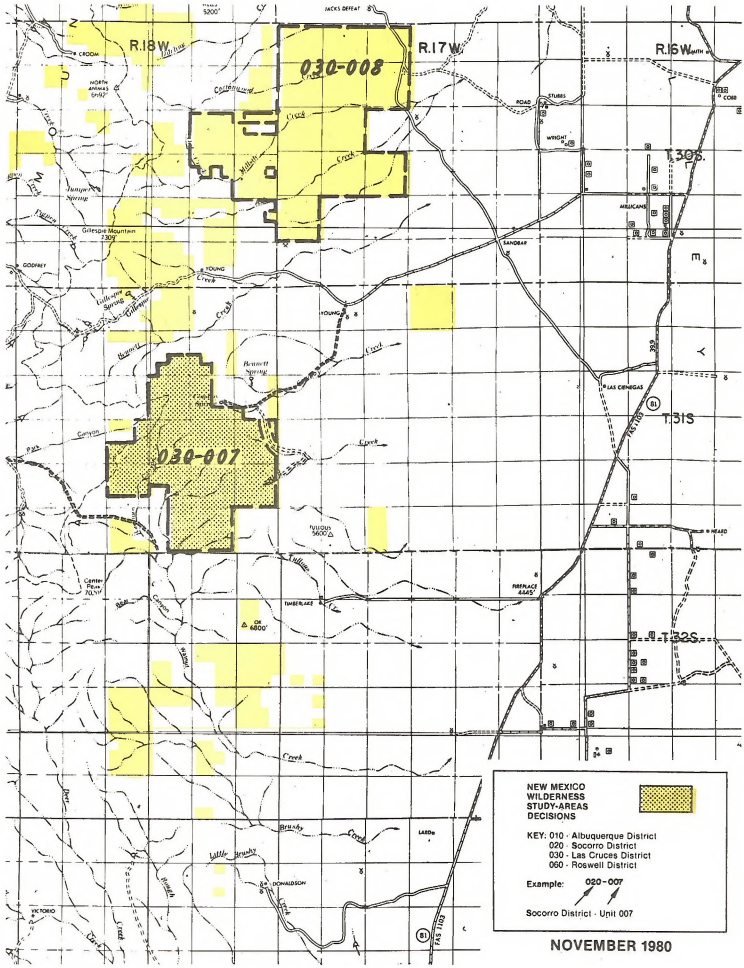
Other specific comments supporting WSA status for this unit indicated that the area is natural, provides outstanding opportunities for solitude and primitive and unconfined recreation and may provide habitat for threatened and endangered plants and animals.

After careful evaluation of all intensive inventory information a field check of new information provided, and assessing the public comments received, the BLM still considers the Millsite Creek unit to lack wilderness characteristics.

BLM policy on assessing the imprints of man outside of a study unit is found on page 13 of the Wilderness Inventory Handbook (Blue Book). It is reproduced in its entirety.

> Imprints of man outside the inventory unit will not normally be considered in assessing naturalness of a unit. However, if an outside impact of major significance exists, it should be at least noted in the overall inventory unit description and evaluated for its direct effects on the land under study. Imprints of man outside the area will not automatically disqualify an area for consideration.

It is the BLM decision that the massive Hidalgo Copper Smelter owned and operated by the Phelps-Dodge Corporation has a significant impact on the Millsite Creek unit. The plant complex contains over 2.8 million square feet of floor space, the main smoke stack is 600 ft. high. It emits roughly 200,000 cubic feet of visible pollutants per minute. The majority of the complex is painted white. This significant imprint, because of the gently sloping topography downhill to the smelter, is visible from anywhere within the unit. This affects the apparent naturalness of the unit and make the opportunities for solitude less than outstanding. The Millsite Creek unit is, therefore, dropped from further wilderness consideration.


R.18W.
R.17W.
R.16W.
030-008
030-007
T.30S.
T.31S.
T.32S.
Miller Creek
Bennett Spring
Gillespie Mountain
7309'
Center Peak
6870'
Hillsboro Peak
6800'
Fillmore Canyon
Timberlake
Young
Godfrey
Sandrap
Mescalero
Las Cienegas
Fireplace
Rabbit Ear
Dowaldson
Victorio
Las Cruces
Jacks Defeat
Stubbs
Wright
Nolan
Tularosa
Creek
Canyon
Spring
Mountain
Peak
Hill
Ranch
Road
Trail
Mesa
Arroyo
Draw
Gap
Flat
Basin
Valley
Ridge
Pass
Lake
Park
Forest
Reserve
Monument
Indian
Wilderness
Study
Area
Boundary
Township
Range
Section
Principal
Meridian
New
Mexico
Arizona
Texas
Utah
Colorado
Nevada
Oklahoma
Kansas
Wyoming
California
Alaska
Hawaii
Idaho
Montana
Oregon
Washington
Nebraska
Dakota
Minnesota
Iowa
Missouri
Arkansas
Louisiana
Mississippi
Alabama
Georgia
Florida
Tennessee
Kentucky
Illinois
Indiana
Ohio
Michigan
Wisconsin
Pennsylvania
New York
Maine
Vermont
New Hampshire
Massachusetts
Rhode Island
Connecticut
New Jersey
Delaware
Maryland
West Virginia
Virginia
North Carolina
South Carolina
NEW MEXICO
WILDERNESS
STUDY-AREAS
DECISIONS
KEY: 010 - Albuquerque District
020 - Socorro District
030 - Las Cruces District
060 - Roswell District
Example: 020-007
Socorro District - Unit 007
NOVEMBER 1980

Beacon Hill NM-030-009 Unit Acreage: 37,660

Unit Description

The Beacon Hill unit is located 3 miles SE of Animas, New Mexico. The northern Animas Mountains comprise the central portion of the unit. The eastern and southwestern portions of the unit contain alluvial fans and portions of the Playas and Animas Valley. Vegetative cover consists of shortgrasses and desert shrub with scattered pinyon-juniper at higher elevations.

Wilderness Characteristics

SIZE: This unit contains 37,660 acres of public land. There are no state or private inholdings. Thirty miles of roads cut the Beacon Hill inventory unit into 9 roadless areas. Three of these areas are greater than 5,000 acres in size.

NATURALNESS: The unit lacks naturalness. The roadless area in the north-central portion of the unit (12,700 acres) contains 4 miles of buried pipeline, 3 drinking tubs, 2 storage tanks, 4 dirt tanks, 2 windmills, a corral, and 8 miles of jeep trails. Surface disturbance associated with unpatented mining claims is substantially noticeable in the area due to the sparse vegetation, thin rocky soils, and locations of the scars.

The two roadless areas in the southern portion of the unit are divided by the road through Whitmire Pass. Both areas have narrow, constricted configurations and both are no more than 2.5 miles wide at any point. The roadless area north of Whitmire Pass (6,400 acres) contains 2 dirt tanks, 2 detention dams, and 6 miles of jeep trails. Mining activity is noticeable in the NE portion of the area. The roadless area south of Whitmire Pass (9,600 acres) contains a dirt tank, windmill, 3 spreader dams, and 4 miles of jeep trials. In summary, all three roadless areas greater than 5,000 acres within the Beacon Hill unit are cumulatively impacted by the works of man and lack apparent naturalness.

OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES: The unit does not offer outstanding opportunities for solitude or primitive and unconfined recreation. The most interesting and rugged central portions of the unit are cut up into areas less than 5,000 acres. Due to configuration and limited topographic and vegetative screening, opportunities available in those areas greater than 5,000 acres are not considered outstanding.

SUPPLEMENTAL VALUES: There are no known supplemental values within the Beacon Hill unit.

Final WSA Decision

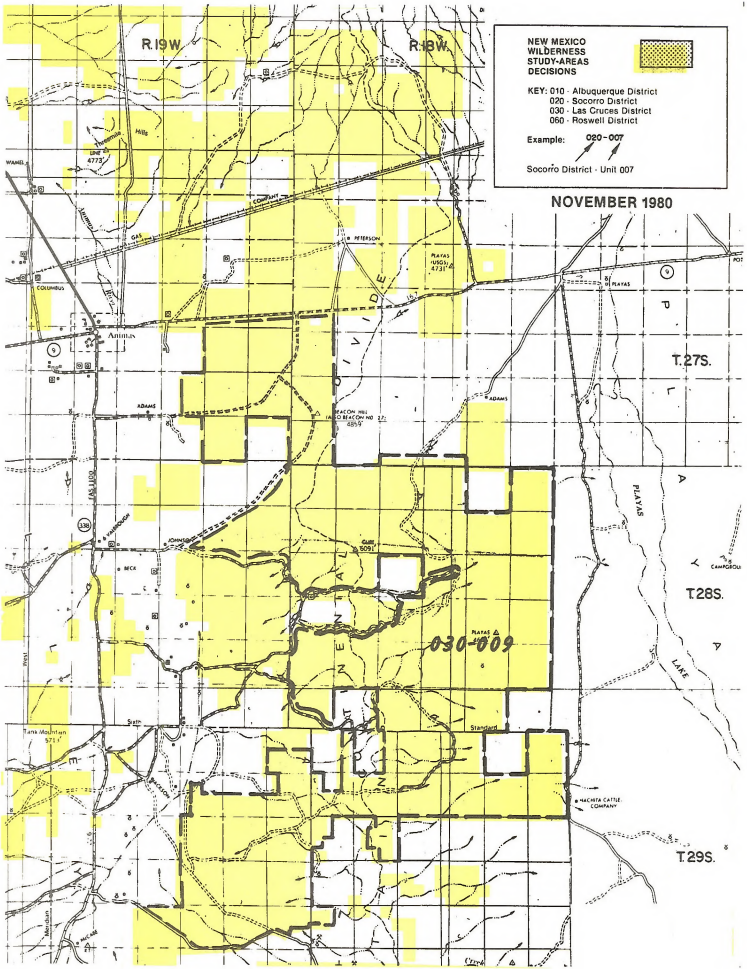
Five comments received during the public review period opposed WSA designation of the Beacon Hill unit. One comment pointed out that numerous roads divide the unit into smaller areas, none of which meet the naturalness criterion. Range improvements and mining activity were described as negative impacts on the naturalness of the unit as well as the opportunities for solitude and primitive recreation. One comment considered the opportunities for solitude less than outstanding because of the proximity of the Playas Smelter.

Comments opposing WSA status for the Beacon Hill unit also addressed resource conflicts and management considerations. The presence of hardrock minerals, oil and gas potential, and the possibility of adverse effects on the Playas Smelter operations due to restrictions in the Clean Air Act were identified as resource conflicts. The difficulty of administering the area as wilderness due to its irregular configuration was also mentioned. Resource conflicts and potential management problems are wilderness study considerations and have no bearing on the WSA decision.

Four people stated that more information was necessary before they could comment and suggested that the Beacon Hill unit be reinventoried.

Ten of the public comments received during the public review period supported WSA status for Beacon Hill. The unit was also included in the New Mexico Conservationist Wilderness Study Area Proposal and the Las Cruces District Conservationist Proposal. Size recommendations for the proposed WSA varied from 12,700 acres in the north-central part of the unit to 37,660 acres, and 40,000 acres. Supporting reasons included naturalness, outstanding opportunities for solitude and primitive forms of recreation, and possible habitat for threatened and endangered species.

The Bureau's original recommendation stated that the Beacon Hill unit lacks wilderness characteristics and does not qualify for wilderness study. Public comments were received in support of and in opposition to the Bureau recommendation. However, the public offered no new inventory information. Therefore, the Beacon Hill inventory unit is dropped from further wilderness consideration.


NEW MEXICO
WILDERNESS
STUDY-AREAS
DECISIONS
KEY: 010 - Albuquerque District
020 - Socorro District
030 - Las Cruces District
060 - Roswell District
Example: 020-007
Socorro District - Unit 007
NOVEMBER 1980
R.19W.
R.18W.
T.27S.
T.28S.
T.29S.
030-009
Animas
PLAYAS
LAKE
PLAYAS
Standard
Tank Mountain
NACHITA CATTLE COMPANY
COLUMBUS
ADAMS
JOHNSON
BECK
PETERSON
COMPANY
GAS
Mills
Thoroughs
WAMEL
Meridian
Mountain
Creek

Pyramids NM-030-011 Unit Acreage: 52,860

Unit Description

Directly south of Lordsburg, New Mexico, this unit includes the middle part of the Pyramid Mountains and gently sloping to flat terrain to the east. The Pyramids are bare, pyramidal shaped hills sparsely vegetated with grasses. Creosote, mesquite, grasses, and cacti are predominant in the flatter areas.

Wilderness Characteristics

SIZE: Roads identified in intensive inventory divide this unit into 5 areas; 2 of these areas (North and South) are greater than 5,000 acres.

NATURALNESS: The naturalness of both areas has been cumulatively and negatively impacted by range improvements and mining activity. The northern area contains 7 dirt tanks, 3 windmills, 2 storage tanks, 12 miles of buried pipeline, 10 drinking tubs or troughs, a rock dam, a wooden barn and holding pens, and a corral. There are approximately 14 miles of jeep trail in the area and substantial evidence of mining activity. The southern area contains 3 dirt tanks and 5 windmills. At least 5 areas in the western part of the area (around Lighting Dock Mountain) exhibit substantial evidence of mining.

OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES: The unit does not contain outstanding opportunities for solitude or primitive and unconfined recreation. Although present, due to the limited vegetative screening and number and location of developments (especially mining activity), opportunities to avoid the sights and sounds of others or for dispersed recreation cannot be considered outstanding.

SUPPLEMENTAL VALUES: There are no known supplemental values within the Pyramids unit.

Final WSA Decision

The BLM recommended that the Pyramids intensive inventory unit be dropped from further wilderness review. Public comments were received both in favor and in opposition to the BLM recommendation.

There were four comments received requesting additional inventory. These comments were in a form letter type format. They felt there was not enough information on which to comment.

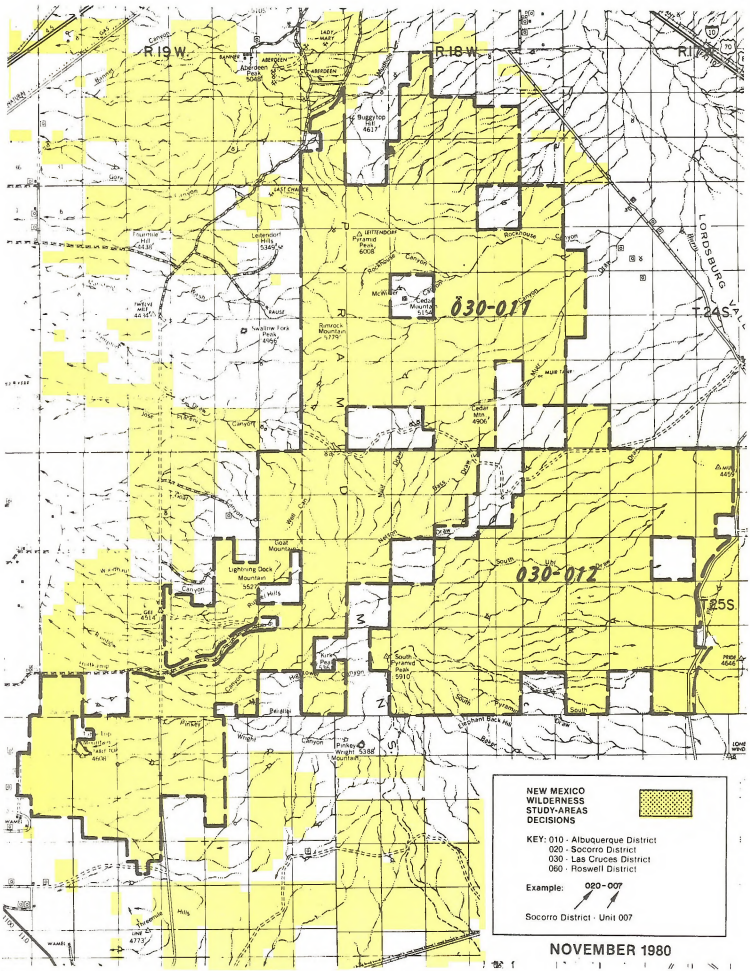
Comments opposing WSA status for the Pyramids unit cited the range improvements and mining activity and their associated roads and trails as impacting naturalness. Other characteristics listed were lack of opportunity for solitude or primitive and unconfined recreation and that the "area was not unique". One comment was that the unit was "cut up by roads".

Both the New Mexico Conservationist Wilderness Study Area Proposal and the Las Cruces District Conservationist Proposal endorsed two WSA's within this unit; one of about 5,000 acres around Pyramid Peak and one of about 10,000 acres around Rimrock Mountain. No specific supporting information was given; however, various individuals provided letters giving blanket support to these proposals.

One comment received was that "One's perception of Pyramid Peak or Rimrock would be vastly different if one hiked in from the road and climbed them rather than drove in on rough roads cataloging all the intrusions on the periphery". Another comment received said, "Add Rimrock to protect cacti and other desert plants".

Other supporting reasons for WSA designation include outstanding opportunities for solitude and primitive forms of recreation, scenic values and possible habitat for endangered animal and plant species.

The comments received during the public review period contained no new inventory information. After careful evaluation of all intensive inventory data and public comments, the BLM still considers the Pyramids unit to lack wilderness characteristics. The area that contains Rimrock Mountain is practically cut in half by roads and non-BLM lands. Other roads and trails with their associated mining and range impacts have adversely impacted the area's naturalness. Due to these imprints of man's work, and the size, shape, and the relationship to the higher points in the unit the opportunities for solitude and primitive types of recreation are not outstanding. The Pyramid unit is, therefore, dropped from further wilderness consideration.


R.19 W.
R.18 W.
R.17
T.24 S.
T.25 S.
LORDSBURG VALLEY
030-011
030-012
Aberdeen Peak 5048'
Buggytop Hill 4617'
Leitendorf Hills 5349'
Pyramid Peak 6008'
Rockhouse Canyon
McWilliams Canyon
Cedar Mountain 5154'
Rimrock Mountain 5779'
Swallow Fork Peak 4956'
Cedar Mtn 4906'
Goat Mountain
Lightning Dock Mountain 5527'
South Pyramid Peak 5910'
Pinkey Wright Mountain 5388'
Elephant Back Hill
Threemile Hills
NEW MEXICO WILDERNESS STUDY-AREAS DECISIONS
KEY: 010 - Albuquerque District
020 - Socorro District
030 - Las Cruces District
060 - Roswell District
Example: 020-007
Socorro District - Unit 007
NOVEMBER 1980

UHL Draw NM-030-012 Unit Acreage: 23,120

Unit Description

Located 14 miles SSW of Lordsburg, New Mexico, this unit contains the southeastern portion of the Pyramid Mountains and gently sloping to level desert valley to the east. Vegetation consists of creosote, mesquite, grasses, and cacti.

Wilderness Characteristics

SIZE: Roads identified during intensive inventory reduced the size of the inventory unit from 23,120 acres to 12,800 acres of public land. There are no non-public inholdings.

NATURALNESS: The unit does not generally appear natural. The unit contains 6 miles of jeep trail, 3 dirt tanks, a windmill, 6 miles of buried pipeline, and 7 drinking tubs. The cumulative impacts of these imprints are substantially noticeable in the unit as a whole.

OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES: The unit does not contain outstanding opportunities for solitude or primitive and unconfined recreation. The size of the unit, in combination with the lack of adequate topographic or vegetative screening, limits opportunities for solitude. The unit does not offer an outstanding diversity in types of recreation or an outstanding quality in any one opportunity.

SUPPLEMENTAL VALUES: There are no known supplemental values within UHL Draw.

Final WSA Decision

The BLM recommended that the UHL Draw unit be dropped from further wilderness review. Public comments received on this unit were both in favor of and in opposition to the BLM recommendation. There were four individuals who felt that the inventory was inadequate and that more information was required before they could make comments.

Comments opposing WSA status for the UHL Draw unit cited range improvements and associated roads and trails as impacts on naturalness. These impacts as well as abundant unpatented mining claims and the "relatively flat lands" were conditions which kept opportunities for solitude and primitive and unconfined recreation to less than outstanding.

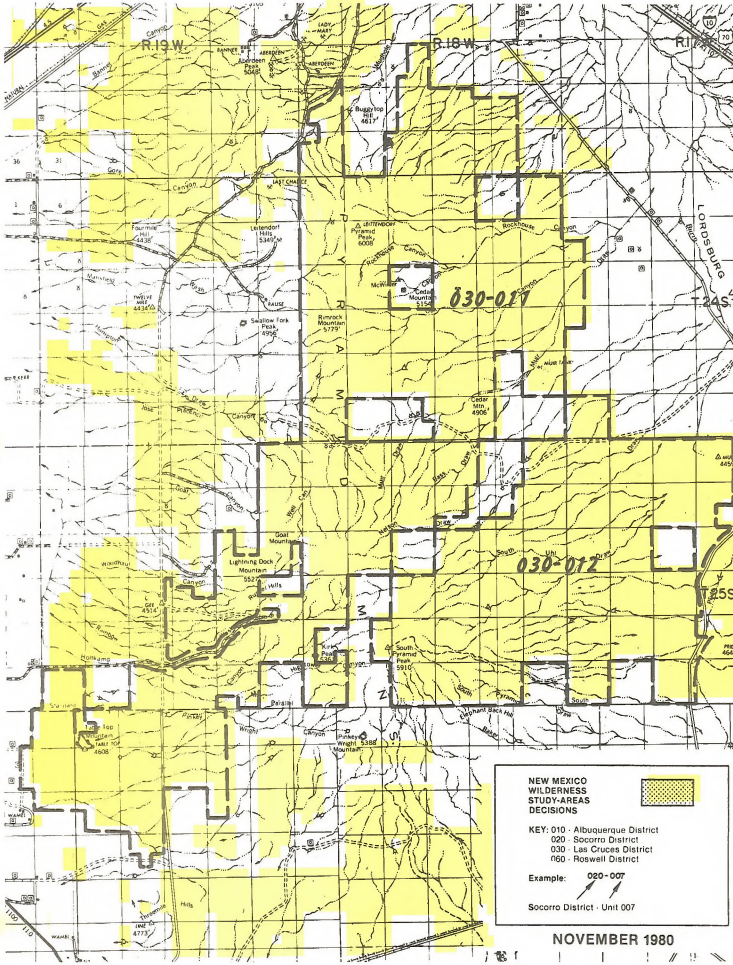
A comment was made that this area is within the area identified as the Overthrust-Hingeline Belt and therefore, may have oil and gas potential. The unit's proximity to Lordsburg, principle population center in Hidalgo County and land ownership patterns and subsequent management problems were mentioned as factors opposing WSA designation.

These types of comments are relevant to resource conflict resolution or management considerations which are not to be considered during the inventory phase. Otherwise these comments are in basic agreement with the BLM's evaluation of the UHL Draw unit's wilderness characteristics.

Both the New Mexico Conservationists Wilderness Study Area Proposal and the Las Cruces District Conservationist proposal support WSA status for UHL Draw. Their acreage proposals are for 15,000 acres. However no maps were received to indicate location.

Comments supporting WSA status for this unit indicated that minimum wilderness characteristics were present. These were size, naturalness and outstanding opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation.

The public comments received during this review period contained no new inventory information. After careful evaluation of all intensive inventory data and relevant public comment, the BLM still considers the UHL Draw inventory unit to be without wilderness characteristics. The various imprints of man's work combined with the sparse vegetative screening and lack of topographic relief have affected the unit's apparent naturalness and kept the opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation to substantially less than outstanding. The UHL Draw Unit is therefore dropped from further wilderness consideration.



NEW MEXICO WILDERNESS STUDY-AREAS DECISIONS

KEY: 010 - Albuquerque District
020 - Socorro District
030 - Las Cruces District
060 - Roswell District

Example: 020 - 007

Socorro District - Unit 007

NOVEMBER 1980

Gila Box NM-030-023 Unit Acreage: 16,800
WSA Acreage: 7,980

Unit Description

Located approximately 23 miles northwest of Lordsburg, New Mexico, this unit includes the steep sided canyon of the "Lower Box" portion of the Gila River, with canyons and rolling hills in the remainder of the area. Yucca, creosote, cacti, and shortgrass characterize the vegetation in the majority of the unit. River willow and cottonwood are found along the river.

Wilderness Characteristics

SIZE: A revised estimate showed that the original intensive inventory unit contained 20,120 acres public land and 80 acres of private inholdings. The southern boundary of the portion of the unit with wilderness characteristics has been placed along an E-W jeep trail two miles south of the river. This excludes 11,090 acres of the unit lacking naturalness.

NATURALNESS: The recommended WSA generally appears natural. It contains some imprints of man (dirt tank, developed spring, and 2.5 miles of jeep trails), but their cumulative impacts are not substantially noticeable in the unit as a whole.

The portion of the unit excluded by the boundary adjustments contains 4 dirt tanks, 6 miles of jeep trail, a gravel pit, the Black Bob Mine, and power line rights-of-way.

OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES: The unit contains outstanding opportunities for solitude and a primitive and unconfined recreation. The canyon is very remote and rugged. Both topography and vegetation provide ample screening for solitude. Recreational opportunities include rockhounding, sightseeing, fishing, hiking, floatboating, and photography.

SUPPLEMENTAL VALUES: Significant cultural and zoological (threatened and endangered species) supplemental values are present in the recommended WSA.

Final WSA Decision

Five public comments opposing WSA status for the Gila Box unit were received during the public review period. The comments listed imprints of man "nearby and within the unit itself" (range improvements, jeep trails, and mining activity) as impacts on the naturalness of the unit. The comments described opportunities for solitude or primitive recreation as "limited because of topographic and vegetation constraints which provide, at best, a monotonous landscape with no focal features." Maps, photographs, and a list of mining claims were included with the comments.

Thirty-eight personal letters were received during the public review period supporting WSA status for the Gila "Lower Box". Recommendations for the boundaries and size of the proposed WSA varied from 2,400 acres to 19,000 acres. Most of the comments, including the Las Cruces District Conservationist Proposal and the New Mexico Conservationist Wilderness Study Area Proposal, supported the BLM's original proposal for a 9,030 acre WSA. Supporting reasons included the naturalness of the area and the outstanding opportunities for both solitude and primitive forms of recreation. Supplemental values were emphasized in the comments. These included petroglyphs, threatened and endangered species, and especially the unique values of a large natural riparian area in a desert setting.

After consideration of all inventory data and public comment, the BLM still judges the Gila Box unit as having the requisite wilderness characteristics for a WSA. However, the location of final boundaries for the WSA was difficult. Changes from the BLM's original proposed boundaries resulted from public comments on private inholdings, topographic boundaries, and application of the road definition to routes within the unit.

New information received during the public review period revealed that two parcels of private inholdings within the unit were overlooked during the inventory. Forty acres of private land are located in the SW¼SW¼, Sec. 19, T. 19 S., R. 19 W., and should not have been included in the intensive inventory unit boundary. Another forty acres of private land is located in the SE¼SE¼, Sec. 21, T. 19 S., R. 20 W. This forty acre parcel is a private inholding within the WSA.

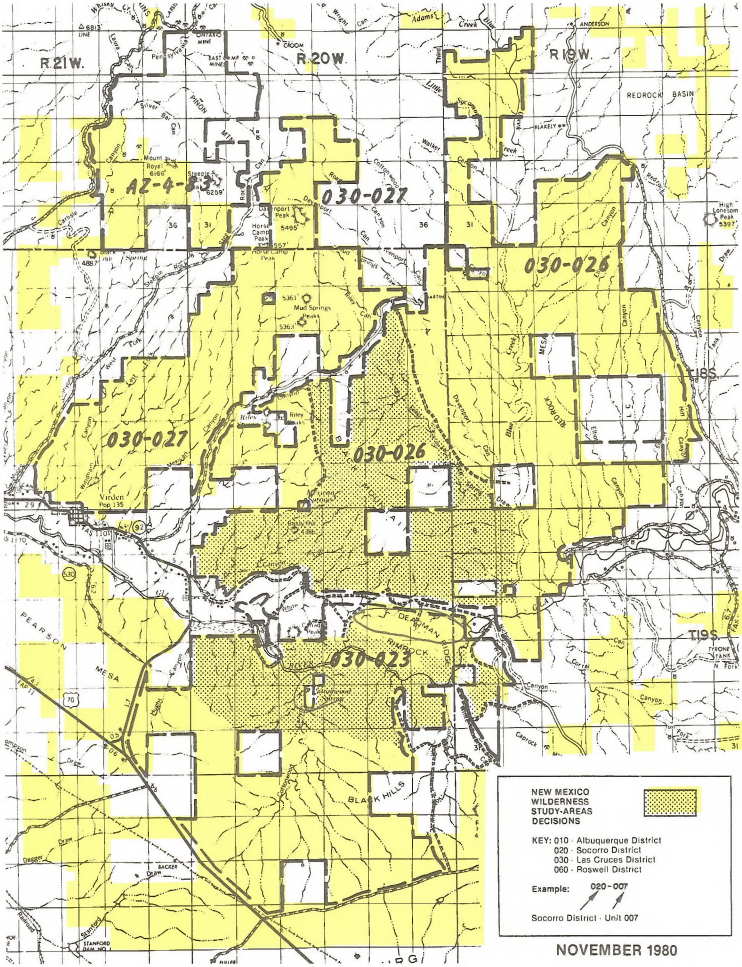
Several of the public comments suggested locating the boundaries of the WSA along natural topographic features. The ridge between the Hughes Canyon and Cottonwood Canyon drainages in the northwest part of the unit and the Rim Rock in the northeast were recommended as natural boundaries.

The BLM agrees with the recommendation to use the top of the Rim Rock as the northeast boundary. A dirt tank and associated access route are located in Sec. 14, T. 19 S., R. 20 W., along the northern base of the Rim Rock. These imprints (along with the Black Bob Mine which was excluded from the originally proposed WSA) can be seen from the northern slopes of the Rim Rock and negatively impact the naturalness of this part of the unit. The placement of the boundary along the top of the Rim Rock would eliminate these imprints from the WSA. Further WSA boundary modification based on natural barriers (Hughes or Cottonwood Canyon) would involve the question of the WSA's manageability and will be considered in the study phase of the wilderness review.

Several public comments questioned the application of the road definition to access routes within the WSA. After additional field examinations, the following access routes were again judged as not meeting the road definition; the route in Cottonwood Canyon running north through Sec. 28, T. 19 S., R. 20 W., the route running north-northwest through Secs. 34, 27, and 28, T. 19 S., R. 20 W., and the route running south through Secs. 20 and 29, T. 19 R., R. 20 W. All of these routes are within the WSA boundary.

One public comment expressed the concern that the bulldozing involved in the repair of the Sunset Ditch Company Canal system last year was excessive and extended into the inventory unit. The Sunset diversion dam is located in the NW¼SW¼, Sec. 21, T. 19 S., R. 2 W. The road providing access to the dam extends through Sec. 20 and into Sec. 21. The road was contructed prior to the passage of FLPMA (Federal Land Policy and Managment Act) of 1976 and forms the boundary of the unit. Many of our previously published maps failed to show the proper location of the road. The bulldozer work in question was conducted along the river to the north of this road and was therefore outside of the inventory unit boundary.

The Gila Box unit is now a WSA. The WSA contains 7,980 acres of public land and 120 acres of private inholdings.


R.21W.
R.20W.
R.19W.
T.18S.
T.19S.
AZ-4-53
030-027
030-026
030-027
030-026
030-023
Viden
Pop. 135
REDROCK BASIN
PEARSON MESA
BLACK HILLS
NEW MEXICO WILDERNESS STUDY-AREAS DECISIONS
KEY: 010 - Albuquerque District
020 - Socorro District
030 - Las Cruces District
060 - Roswell District
Example: 020-007
Socorro District - Unit 007
NOVEMBER 1980

Redrock NM-030-025 Unit Acreage: 14,460

Unit Description

Directly SE of Redrock, NM, this unit is characterized by rolling desert hills and ridges of uniform elevation dissected by drainages towards the Gila River. Vegetation is sparse, consisting of short-grasses, desert shrub, and cacti, with some cottonwoods in the drainages.

Wilderness Characteristics

SIZE: During the intensive inventory the access route through House Canyon was judged as meeting the road definition. This resulted in the northern portion of the unit containing the Gila Middle Box being divided from the remainder of the unit. Since the public land area north of House Canyon is less than 5,000 acres, this part of the unit did not meet the size criterion.

During the public review, the application of the road definition to the House Canyon route was questioned. Further investigation revealed not only that the route does not meet the road definition, but that the S½ of Section 26, T. 28 S., R. 18 W., containing House Canyon is private land. Therefore, the northern portion of the unit is non-contiguous (based on land status) and should not have been included in the Redrock inventory unit. The northern area is dropped from further wilderness review because it does not meet the size criterion.

The Redrock inventory unit contains approximately 8,600 acres of public land. There are no state or private inholdings.

NATURALNESS: The unit lacks naturalness. Imprints of man within the unit include approximately 2 miles of buried pipeline, 3 drinking tubs, 2 corrals, and 5 large dirt tanks. The pipeline scars are visible where the N-S pipeline crosses the NW-SE trending ridges and arroyos. The dirt tanks are located in arroyos along the eastern edge of the unit and are substantially noticeable from ridges in the central portion of the unit. Due to the cumulative impact of these develop-ments, the unit lacks apparent naturalness.

OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES: Due to the sparse vegetation and modest topography of the area in combination with the size and configuration of the unit, opportunities for solitude or primitive and unconfined recreation are not considered outstanding.

SUPPLEMENTAL VALUES: The Redrock unit contains ecological and biological supplemental values associated with the riparian habitat.

Final WSA Decision

Several public comments were received during the public review opposing WSA status for the Redrock unit. Reasons included roads and lack of naturalness due to range impacts and substantially noticeable jeep trails. Opportunities for solitude and primitive recreation were rated less than outstanding due to the sparse vegetation and "monotonous landscape character". One comment stated, "the topography of the area is nothing to send off postcards about".

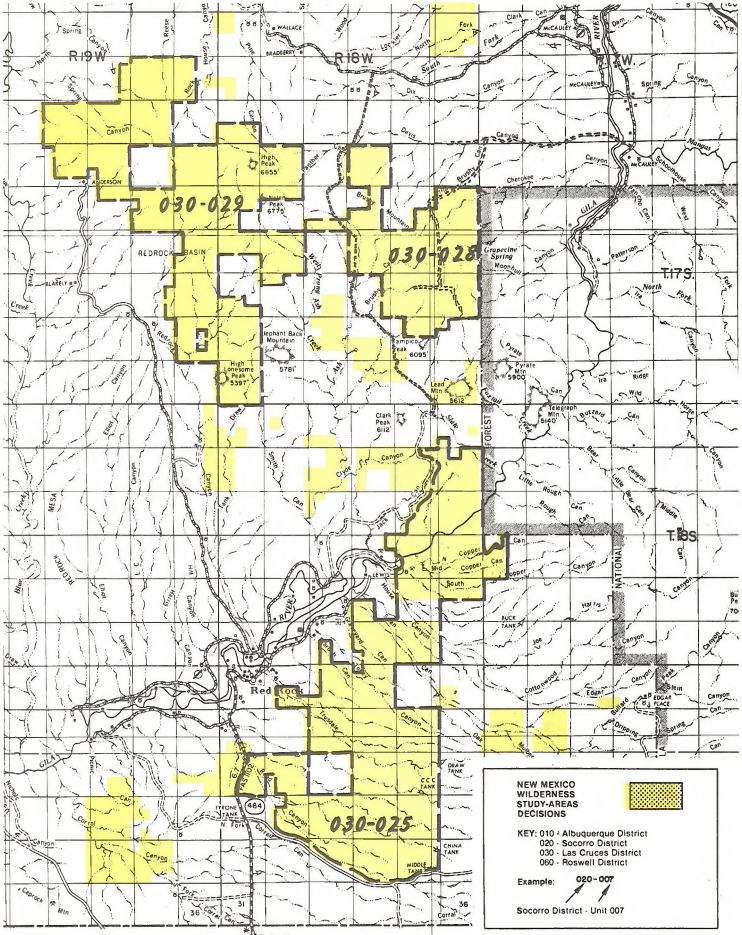
Public comments favoring WSA status for the unit listed the following reasons: naturalness, outstanding opportunities for solitude in a "wild and unfrequented" area, and outstanding opportunities for recreation for "anyone interested in the biological aspects of the Gila area". Ecological and biological supplemental values were discussed in some detail.

One comment suggested inclusion of the area containing the Gila Middle Box as a separate 4,040 acre WSA if the House Canyon route is a road. The comment stated that even though the area is less than 5,000 acres in size, due to its ruggedness and topographic isolation, it meets the second part of the size criterion in the Wilderness Act. This part of the act applies to an area less than 5,000 acres that is "of sufficient size as to make practicable its preservation and use in an unimpaired condition". Another comment described the Gila Middle Box as "one of the finest bird areas and whitewater runs in the state. . . the area should be protected".

Two of the comments expressed concern that a trespass road had been recently bladed across the unit northeast of House Canyon. Field checks failed to locate the alleged trespass road. The only blade scars noted in the area are those associated with the Copper Canyon pipeline which was installed by the BLM in 1971. The buried pipeline and associated access route run ENE from the windmill in House Canyon to the NE¼SE¼, Section 25. T. 18 S., R. 18 W. The route was originally bladed, however it is eroding badly and passable only to 4-wheel drive vehicles.

The BLM recognizes the unique values of the Gila Middle Box. The 1977 Gila Planning Unit, Management Framework Plan, Step 3, Wildlife decision #6 acknowledges the special wildlife and riparian values of the area. Additionally, the Middle Box is included in the 255 mile segment of the Gila River that is currently included in the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service's "National Rivers Inventory, Natural and Free-Flowing Phase". Although the area does not meet the wilderness criteria, it does deserve some form of protection. Therefore, the Middle Box should be considered for designation as an Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC).

Since no new inventory information was received concerning the remaining part of the Redrock unit, it is now dropped from further wilderness consideration.


R19W
R18W
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030-025
REDROCK BASIN
T.17S.
T.18S.
NATIONAL FOREST
Red Rock
To Lordsburg
R.19 W.
R.18 W.
NEW MEXICO WILDERNESS STUDY-AREAS DECISIONS
KEY: 010 - Albuquerque District
020 - Socorro District
030 - Las Cruces District
060 - Roswell District
Example: 020-007
Socorro District - Unit 007
NOVEMBER 1980

Blue Creek NM-030-026 Unit Acreage: 46,580
WSA Acreage: 13,584

Unit Description

This unit is located 2 miles NE of Redrock, NM, north of the Gila River. Rolling desert hills and drainages towards the Gila River characterize the unit. Black Mountain, in the SW part of the unit, is the major physiographic feature. Typical vegetation is desert shrub, cacti, and shortgrasses with riparian types along the drainages and sparse pinyon-juniper at higher elevations.

Wilderness Characteristics

SIZE: Due to a revised estimate, the number of acres being intensively inventoried is 33,473. The recommended WSA includes 13,584 acres of public land and 1,280 acres of state inholdings. Recommended boundary adjustments would exclude 19,889 acres of public land NE and SW of Black Mountain lacking naturalness.

NATURALNESS: The recommended WSA appears to be natural and the cumulative impacts of the imprints of man (3 miles of jeep trail, 2 dirt tanks, and a corral) are not substantially noticeable in the unit as a whole.

The recommended WSA boundary would exclude 6 miles of buried pipeline, 6 drinking tubs, 8 dirt tanks, 10 miles of jeep trails, 2 corrals, a windmill, and a water storage tank. The boundary would also exclude 5 miles of Duncan Valley Electric Cooperative powerline running along the NE edge of the unit and 4 miles of powerline along the southern edge.

OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES: Black Mountain is located in the central portion of the recommended WSA. Surrounding canyons and drainages are also within the recommended boundary. The size and configuration of the unit in combination with its topographic variety and unity provide outstanding opportunities for solitude and primitive and unconfined recreation.

SUPPLEMENTAL VALUES: The unit provides contrasting scenic vistas of mountainous forested areas to the north and northeast and the Gila River and Lordsburg desert mesa to the south.

Final WSA Decision

The BLM recommended that a portion of the Blue Creek unit be designated as a WSA. Public comments were received both in favor of and in opposition to the BLM recommendation. Several of the comments opposing WSA designation cited range improvements and their associated access routes as impacting the naturalness of the recommended area. Two specific comments addressed the Duncan Valley Electric Cooperative powerlines on the periphery of the unit. Due to the scale of the map published in the "New Mexico Wilderness Study Area Proposals," March 1980, it appears that these lines are in the WSA proposal. This, however, is not the case and they are excluded from the unit. One of the comments suggested that a ¼ mile buffer strip be provided adjacent to these lines to insure maintenance access and to protect the wilderness characteristics. This is a management consideration and will be addressed in the study phase.

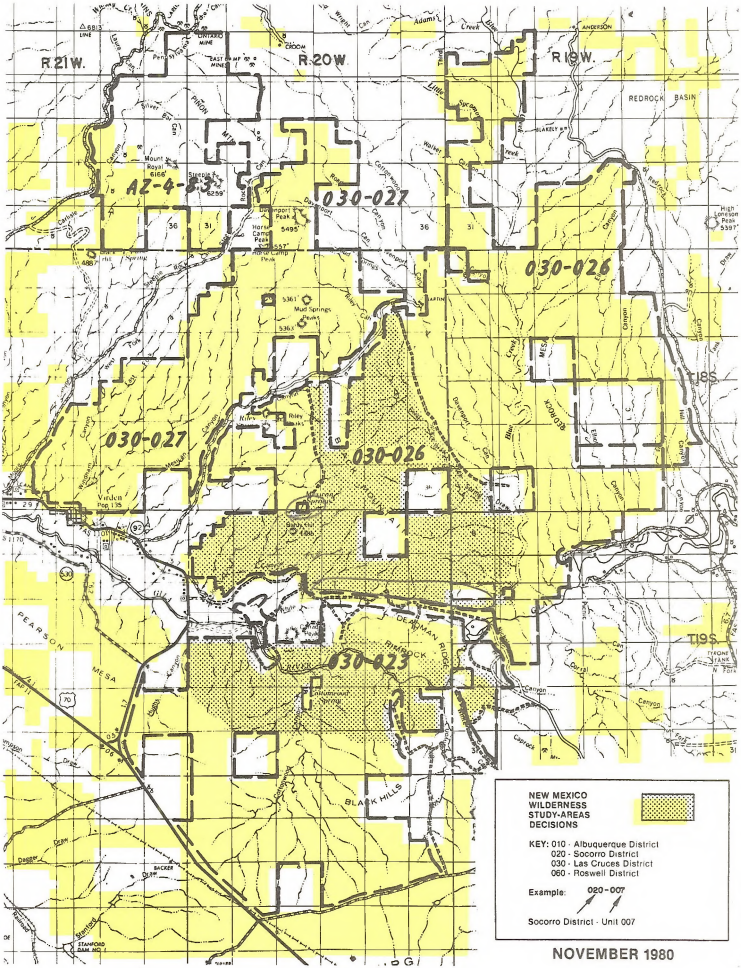
A specific comment was received stating that "The access road to Mexican Springs continues south to intersect with the Fuller Farm road". Since BLM had called this access route a "way" during the inventory, a re-inventory was conducted. There was no evidence of maintenance and the BLM decision is that it is not a road.

Other reasons given were that the unit lacks outstanding opportunities for solitude or primitive and unconfined recreation, and that the supplemental scenic values were overstated.

Both the New Mexico Conservationist Wilderness Study Area Proposal and the Las Cruces District Conservationist Proposal support the BLM recommendation. One specific comment proposed 46,580 acres, another 15,000 acres, and two individuals wanted the deleted portion re-inventoried. No supporting information was received for any of these proposals. One comment suggested adjusting the eastern WSA boundary from the west side of Blue Creek to the east side of Blue Creek. Again, the scale of the map published in the Brown Book is such that boundaries are difficult to accurately identify, the proposed eastern boundary of the WSA is located along the east side of Blue Creek. The southern boundary of the unit is the Duncan Valley Electric line and maintenance road.

Other characteristics cited as reasons for designation as a WSA were naturalness and outstanding opportunities for solitude and primitive types of recreation. Several comments cited the Gila River's riparian habitat as a supplemental value.

After a careful evaluation of the intensive inventory data and public comment, the BLM still considers the 13,584 acres which were recommended for WSA designation to have wilderness characteristics. The few imprints of man within the WSA are substantially unnoticeable and do not detract from apparent naturalness. Black Mountain and its associated drainages and canyons is located near the geographic center of the WSA. The configuration as well as the size and the topographic screening of the Black Mountain drainages provide outstanding opportunities to avoid the sights and sound of other visitors within the unit. Therefore, 13,584 acres of the Blue Creek unit are designated as a WSA.


R.21W.
R.20W
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T.18S.
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AZ-4-F-3
030-027
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030-023
REDROCK BASIN
PEARSON MESA
BLACK HILLS
DEADMAN ROCK
Mud Springs
Riley
Vanlee
Pop. 135
Redrock
Deadman Rock
Stanford Dam No. 1
NEW MEXICO
WILDERNESS
STUDY-AREAS
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KEY: 010 - Albuquerque District
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Example: 020-007
Socorro District - Unit 007
NOVEMBER 1980

Mud Springs Peak NM-030-027 Unit Acreage: 12,900

Unit Description

This unit is located directly north and northeast of Virden, NM. The southern part of the unit is characterized by sparsely vegetated rolling hills and ridges cut by SW-NE trending, shallow arroyos. Moving north, the topography becomes more rugged and broken. Vegetation consists of desert shrub and shortgrass with scattered pinyon-juniper in the northernmost portions of the unit.

Wilderness Characteristics

SIZE: A revised estimate shows that the Mud Springs Peak inventory unit contains 14,960 acres of public land. This unit is divided into two roadless areas (North and South) greater than 5,000 acres by a road running south from the NE corner of Sec. 6, T. 18 S., R. 20 W., to the SW corner of Sec. 20.

NATURALNESS: The southern area is natural. A windmill, corral, and tub are located in the center of the area. The development is substantially unnoticeable in the overall unit.

The northern area lacks apparent naturalness. The boundary surrounds one topographic feature (Mud Springs Peak) completely. All of the imprints of man (2 dirt tanks, a corral, and 4 miles of jeep trail) are located on the slopes of the mountain or are visible from the slopes. Due to the combination of the area's configuration and location of imprints, apparent naturalness is lacking.

OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES: Both roadless areas lack the necessary topographic and vegetative screening for areas of small size to ensure outstanding opportunities for solitude. Neither area offers outstanding opportunities for dispersed recreation in terms of variety or quality of opportunities.

SUPPLEMENTAL VALUES: There are no known supplemental values in the unit.

Final WSA Decision

The BLM recommended that the Mud Springs Peak unit be dropped from further wilderness consideration. Public comments were received both in favor of and in opposition to this recommendation. There were four individuals who felt that the inventory was inadequate and that more information was required before they could make comments. These comments appeared in a form letter type format.

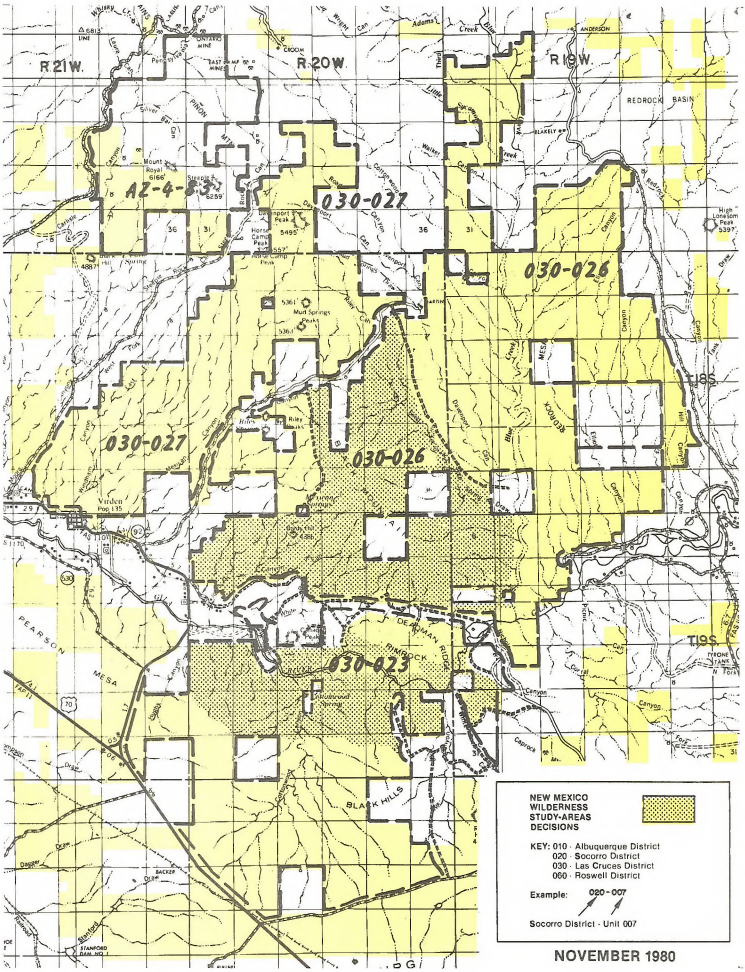
Comments opposing WSA status for the Mud Springs Peak unit cited range improvements and their associated roads and ways as impacting the naturalness of the unit. Other comments noted that the opportunities for solitude or primitive and unconfined recreation were not outstanding due to the lack of vegetative or topographic screening.

Both the New Mexico Conservationist Wilderness Study Area Proposal and the Las Cruces District Conservationist Proposal endorsed WSA status for both Mud Springs Peak North and South, the total acreage proposed differed from 14,960 to 11,000 acres. Some general supporting information was given. Several individuals submitted letters giving blanket support for WSA status for this unit.

One comment stated that since this area was near the Gila River, a "biogeographic corridor", it has supplemental values and the southern portion of the unit should be designated as a WSA. Another individual said " A fine area especially in the southern part. Would form an interesting and important wilderness complex in combination with Blue Creek and the Gila Box" units.

Other supporting reasons for WSA designation included outstanding opportunities for solitude and primitive types of recreation. Several comments indicated that the unit is natural. One individual comment was that "If the road dividing the unit is indeed a road, then two WSA's should be designated". This access route's status was again considered and the BLM's decision remains the same.

After a careful evaluation of the intensive inventory data and the public comments, the BLM still considers the Mud Springs peak unit to lack Wilderness characteristics. Due to the combination of the area's configuration, size, and location of imprints, apparent naturalness is lacking. Both areas (North & South) lack the necessary topographic and especially vegetative screening to ensure outstanding opportunities for solitude. The Mud Springs Peak unit is, therefore, dropped from further wilderness consideration.


R.21W.
R.20W.
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AZ-4-3
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030-026
030-023
T.9S.
T.10S.
REDROCK BASIN
PEARSON MESA
DEMAN RIDGE
BLACK HILLS
Mount Royal 6160
Horse Camp Peak 5495
Mud Springs Peak 5361
Mud Springs
Mule Canyon Peak 5397
Virden Pop 135
Stanford Dam No. 1
NEW MEXICO WILDERNESS STUDY-AREAS DECISIONS
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Example: 020 - 007
Socorro District - Unit 007
NOVEMBER 1980

Grapevine Spring NM-030-028 Unit Acreage: 5,560

Unit Description

This unit is located 10 air miles NE of Redrock, NM, northwest of the Big Burro Mountains. The unit is characterized by steep mountainous topography and pinyon-juniper woodland.

Wilderness Characteristics

SIZE: Boundary adjustments were made at the western edge of the unit to exclude a road along Ash Creek. This unit now contains 5,200 acres of public land. There are no state or private inholdings.

NATURALNESS: The BLM's original evaluation of the naturalness criterion stated: "Five earth tanks, one mile of pipeline, and two drinking tubs are within the unit boundary. However, the rugged topography and moderate to dense vegetative cover provide effective screening for these imprints of man and their cumulative impacts are not substantially noticeable in the unit as a whole." Comments received during the public review resulted in a re-evaluation of the unit's naturalness (See discussion of final decision below).

OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES: The unit provides outstanding opportunities for solitude and primitive and unconfined recreation. The terrain and vegetation easily allow one to escape the sights and sounds of other visitors. Outstanding opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation include hiking, backpacking, photography, and hunting.

SUPPLEMENTAL VALUES: The unit has scenic supplemental values.

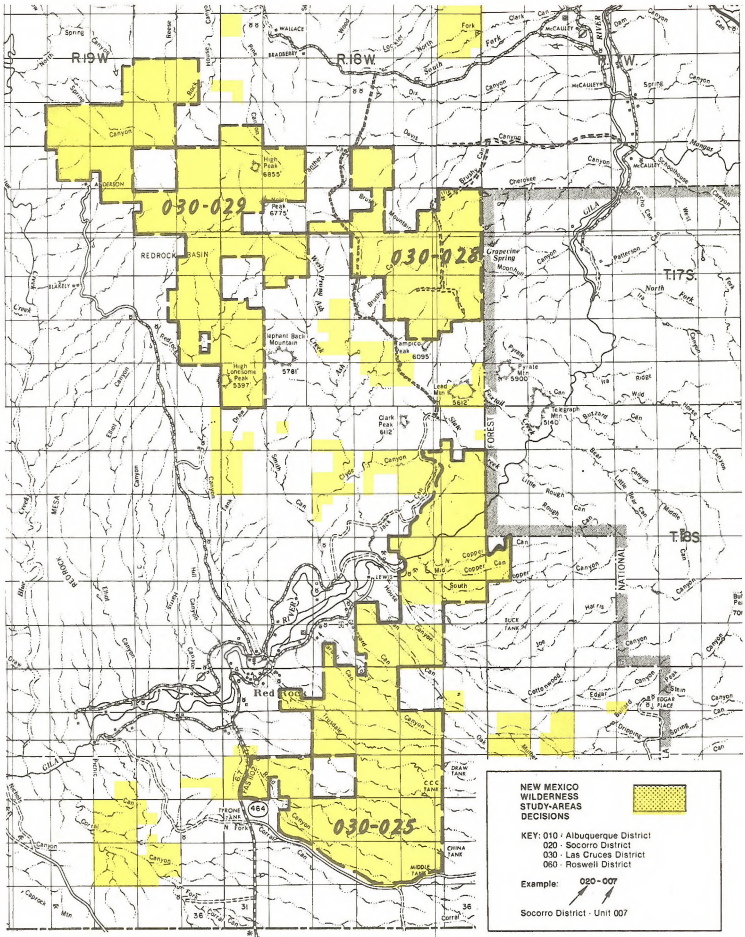
Final WSA Decision

The final WSA decision on the Grapevine Spring Unit is especially difficult. The intensive inventory revealed very high scenic values and outstanding opportunities for solitude and primitive recreation. The inventory also identified numerous range improvements. The BLM recommended this unit as a WSA.

Several public comments were received supporting WSA status for the unit. Supporting reasons included size, naturalness, and supplemental values. The ruggedness of the area and the dense vegetation were described as enhancing features for outstanding solitude and primitive recreation. The unit was also endorsed in the New Mexico Conservationist WSA Proposal and the Las Cruces District Conservationist Proposal.

Several comments were also received during the public review opposing WSA status for the unit. Most of these comments addressed the impacts of range improvements on the naturalness of the unit and the barely 5,000 acre size of the unit. Two comments questioned the application of the road definition to the route in Little Brushy Canyon. The comments included an affidavit, maps, and photographs. A field check confirmed that the route meets the road definition. The banks of the road were obviously cut by mechanical means. There are prominent multiple berms in someplaces and evidence that tree cutting was necessary to construct the road. The field check also revealed three cement dams and two orginally bladed jeep trails in the unit that were not mapped in the intensive inventory.

After careful consideration of all inventory data, the Grapevine Spring unit is judged to be substantially impacted by the works of man. The Little Brushy Canyon road penetrates the core of the unit. Range improvements and jeep trails associated with the roads negate the apparent naturalness of the area. The Grapevine Spring unit is therefore dropped from further wilderness consideration.


R.19W.
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R.18 W.
NOVEMBER 1980

Unit Description

This unit is located 10 air miles north of Redrock, NM. The terrain is mountainous and dissected by numerous canyons. Vegetation consists primarily of short grasses with scattered pinyon-juniper.

Wilderness Characteristics

SIZE: This unit contains 12,640 acres of public land. There are no state or private inholdings.

NATURALNESS: The unit lacks apparent naturalness. A dirt tank is located in nearly every canyon in the unit. A total of 21 dirt tanks and approximately 15 miles of jeep trail are within the unit boundary. These imprints of man cumulatively and substantially impact the naturalness of the unit.

OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES: The unit does not offer outstanding opportunities for solitude or primitive and unconfined recreation. The number and location of developments, combined with the size and configuration of the unit and sparse vegetative screening limit opportunities to avoid the sights and evidence of man. These characteristics also reduce opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation to less than outstanding.

SUPPLEMENTAL VALUES: There are no known supplemental values within the unit.

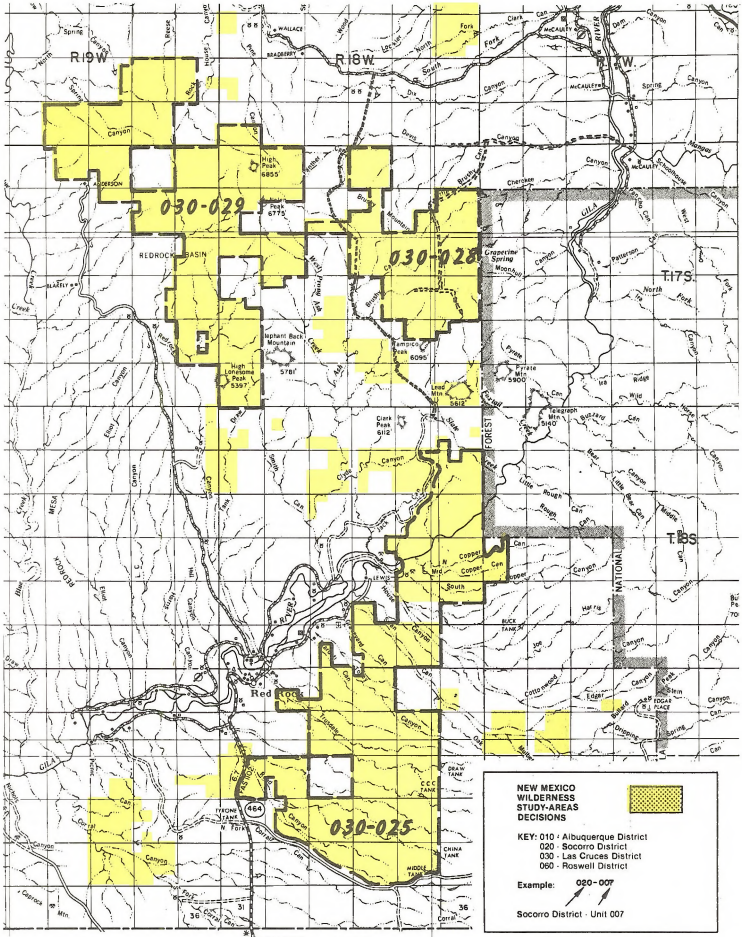
Final WSA Decision

The BLM recommended that the High Lonesome inventory unit be dropped from further wilderness review. Public comments on the unit were limited. There was one specific comment opposing WSA status because of the numerous range improvements within the unit. One other comment stated agreement with the BLM proposal but offered no supporting reasons.

Four people felt the unit received an inadequate inventory. They expressed the need for more information before they could make comments.

There were no pro WSA comments received for this area.

The comments received during the public review period contained no new inventory information. Unit specific comments agreed with the BLM recommendation. After careful evaluation of all intensive inventory data and public comments, the BLM still considers the High Lonesome unit as lacking wilderness characteristics. Dirt tanks, pipelines and associated jeep trails are substantially noticeable within the unit and cumulatively and negatively impact naturalness. The opportunities for solitude and primitive and unconfined recreation are substantially less than outstanding due to sparse vegetative screening and the abundance of the sights and sounds of man. The High Lonesome unit is therefore dropped from further wilderness consideration.



R.19 W. R.18 W.

NOVEMBER 1980

Cooke Range NM-030-031 Unit Acreage: 28,000
WSA Acreage: 19,870

Unit Description

This unit, located 20 miles north of Deming, NM, includes most of the rugged Cooke Range and surrounding foothills and drainages. Elevation varies from 4,800 feet in Starvation Draw to 8,408 feet at Cooke's Peak. Vegetation consists of mixed mountain shrub, desert shrub, and grasses with pinyon-juniper occurring in canyons and on east and north-facing slopes.

Wilderness Characteristics

SIZE: Boundary adjustments to exclude roads were made in the north and NE portions of the unit. The recommended WSA contains 19,870 acres of public land and 640 acres of state inholdings.

NATURALNESS: The unit generally appears natural. A telephone line, earthen dams, mining scars, 3 windmills, 8 springs, and 4 jeep trails are within the inventory unit boundary. However, these imprints are topographically and vegetatively screened and their cumulative impacts are not substantially noticeable in the unit as a whole. A recommended WSA boundary adjustment in the southern part of the unit would exclude a detention dam that substantially impacts naturalness locally. The only range improvements in the recommended WSA are two springs and one windmill.

OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES: The unit contains outstanding opportunities for solitude and primitive and unconfined recreation. Both topography and vegetation provide ample screening for solitude. Recreational opportunities include backpacking, hiking, hunting, mountain and rock climbing, horseback riding, rock-hounding, and sightseeing.

SUPPLEMENTAL VALUES: The Cooke Range unit contains features of scenic, cultural, and historical value.

Final WSA Decision

Numerous public comments were received on the Cooke Range unit. Thirty-seven comments opposed WSA status for the unit. About half of these comments listed range improvements and mining activity as impacts on the naturalness of the unit. Maps and photos of range improvements and roads were provided. However, no new inventory information was included.

Most of the opposing comments addressed the following resource conflicts: ranching, mining, and other recreation uses, especially rockhounding. Resource conflicts are considerations for the study phase of the wilderness review and have no bearing on the WSA decision.

Cooke Range was supported for WSA status in the New Mexico Conservationist Wilderness Study Area Proposal and the Las Cruces District Conservationist Proposal. Thirty-five personal comments were also received favoring WSA status for the Cooke Range unit. Size, naturalness, and outstanding opportunities for solitude and primitive and unconfined recreation were given as supporting reasons. The scenic, cultural and historical, and wildlife supplemental values were also discussed. One comment described Cooke's Peak as "a granitic mountain of awesome beauty and rugged challenge".

The question of final boundaries for the Cooke's Range WSA was especially difficult. Many comments were received favoring inclusion in the WSA of the northern part of the unit containing the only remnant stand of Arizona Cypress known to be existing in New Mexico. The decision rested largely with the application of the road definition to two routes in the northern part of the unit; the route through Hurricane Pass and the northern part of the route in Hadley Draw which terminates at a windmill in the W½, Sec. 13, T. 20 S., R. 9 W. Both routes were originally improved and according to the permittee "have been maintained in the past and will be in the future". Based on the obvious signs of original construction of both the route to the windmill in Sec. 13 and the route through Hurricane Pass and the confirmation provided by the permittee as to his use and maintenance of the routes, the two routes are judged to be roads and form the northern boundary of the WSA.

New information acquired after release of the WSA proposals also pertains to the location of the northern boundary of the WSA. A patented mining claim in W½ Sec. 13, T. 20 S., R. 9 W., was overlooked in both the initial and intensive inventories. Even if one does not consider the route through Hurricane Pass a "road", the northern portion of the unit is still cut off from the WSA by the road to the windmill in Sec. 13, the patented mining claim in Sec. 13, and the road providing access to mines in the northeast portion of Sec. 14, T. 20 S., R. 9 W.

The public comments indicate real concern and support for the protection of the Arizona Cypress. Several people suggested ACEC (Area of Critical Environmental Concern) designation or possibly making the northern part of the unit a separate WSA of less than 5,000 acres. The BLM does not feel that the northern area by itself has wilderness characteristics. However, the stand of Arizona Cypress should be considered for ACEC designation.

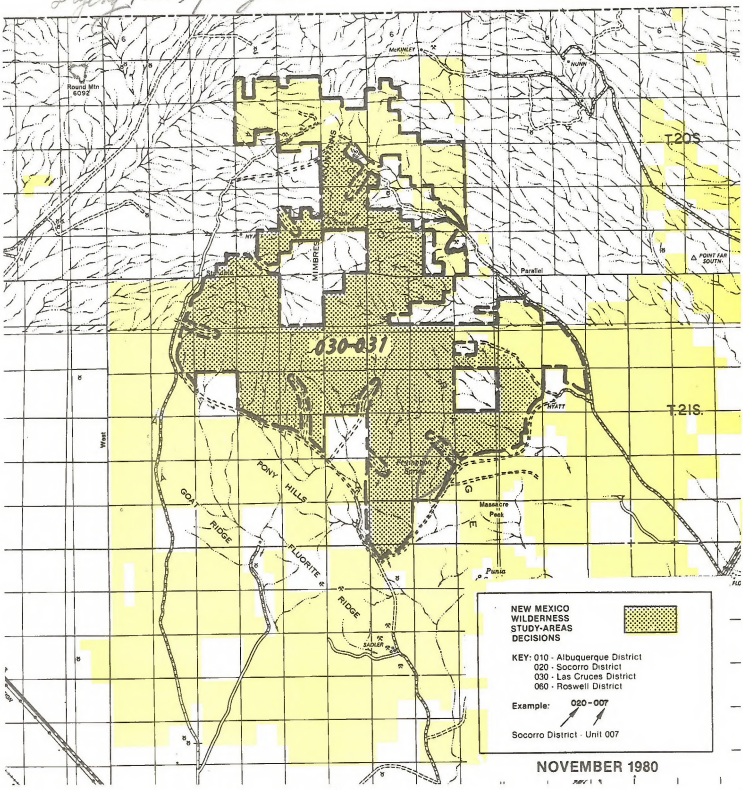
Comments were also received questioning the application of the road definition to the Butterfield Trail route which forms the southeastern boundary of the unit and requesting further consideration for the area to the SE containing Massacre Peak. The route in question was judged by the BLM to be a road in the initial inventory. No comments questioning this judgement were received in the public review period for initial inventory. Therefore, the portion of the unit SE of the Butterfield Trail and containing Massacre Peak was dropped from further wilderness consideration on July 9, 1979 and will not be reconsidered.

The Continental Divide Trail Society commented that their studies indicate the best location for the Continental Divide Trail to be north-south through the unit. Other comments suggested acquisition of state lands in the core of the units. These are considerations for the wilderness study phase.

After careful consideration of public comments and all inventory data, the BLM still judges the Cooke Range unit as having wilderness characteristics. Therefore, the Cooke Range unit is now a WSA.

R.9W. R.8W.

Historic mining activities
Apache occupation
Flying Pan Spring Petrov



Florida Mountains NM-030-034 Unit Acreage: 75,310

Unit Description

This unit, located 12 miles southeast of Deming, NM, contains the Florida Mountains, a rugged north-south trending range with a total relief of about 2,800 feet. Large rock outcrops, high vertical cliffs, and many steep and narrow draws typify the topography. The unit includes surrounding foothills and creosote flats. Vegetation consists of pinyon-juniper grassland, mixed mountain shrub, desert shrub, and shortgrass.

Wilderness Characteristics

SIZE: Roads identified in intensive inventory divided the unit into 17 roadless areas; 4 of which are greater than 5,000 acres. Only one of these 4 areas has wilderness characteristics. The proposed WSA contains 18,904 acres of public land. There are no state or private inholdings.

NATURALNESS: All 4 areas greater than 5,000 acres generally appear natural. There are 4 jeep trails (access to mining claims) and evidences of mining activity within the proposed WSA. These imprints do not cumulatively impact the overall naturalness of the proposed WSA. The 3 roadless areas in the eastern and southern parts of the unit contain earthen dams and jeep trails.

OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES: The recommended WSA includes the central, mountainous portion of the unit. The size and vegetative and topographic screening provide outstanding opportunities for solitude. Outstanding opportunities for hiking, backpacking, mountain climbing, and nature study are present.

The 3 roadless areas to the east and south lack outstanding opportunities for solitude or primitive and unconfined recreation. The areas are located in the foothills and creosote flats. The almost total lack of relief and low growth form of the vegetation in combination with size limit these opportunities.

SUPPLEMENTAL VALUES: The recommended WSA contains scenic and biological supplemental values.

Final WSA Decision

Since the beginning of the BLM wilderness review, the determination of wilderness characteristics in the Florida Mountains has been especially difficult.

After intitial inventory the BLM proposed in the April 1979, "Wilderness Review New Mexico Situation Summaries" that the Florida Mountains be dropped from further wilderness inventory. This recommendation was based on the rationale that "The effects of numerous intrusions, abandoned and operating mines, roads in major areas, and utility lines result in a lack of naturalness in the area and a lack of outstanding opportunities..."

During the public review period on initial inventory, many people disagreed with the BLM's original recommendation. More public comments were received on the Floridas unit than any other unit in the Las Cruces District. The "New Mexico Wilderness Review Initial Inventory Decision," July 9, 1979, reflected the public sentiment; "Because of the comments received, a reasonable doubt exists that all or portions of the area may contain wilderness characteristics and the area will be intensively inventoried to confirm public comment."

Numerous roads were identified during the intensive inventory that divide the original inventory unit into smaller roadless areas. Four of these roadless areas are greater than 5,000 acres and were evaluated for their wilderness characteristics. The BLM judged that one of these areas (in the central, mountainous portion of the unit) had at least minimum wilderness characteristics and proposed that an area of 18,904 acres be designated a WSA. Due to the subjectivity of this decision, heavy emphasis was given to public comments prior to the formulation of a final decision.

During the public review period on intensive inventory, numerous public comments were received and the Floridas unit again proved to be one of the more controversial areas. Many of the comments included photographs, road affidavits, and newspaper clippings.

Forty-three personal letters supported WSA status for the Florida Mountains. The New Mexico Conservationist Wilderness Study Area Proposal and the Las Cruces District Conservationist Proposal supported WSA status for all 4 roadless areas in the unit. Most of the personal letters favoring wilderness study supported the Floridas primarily because of the area's supplemental values and outstanding opportunities for solitude and primitive recreation. Some of the comments described the Floridas as:

"an excellent botanical desert mountain study area."

"For the hiker and mountain climber, this is one of the most outstanding scenic areas in New Mexico."

"This spectacular natural area is of national park quality and easily meets the BLM's WSA criteria in terms of size, virgin condition and unparalleled opportunities for solitary retreat and primitve recreation."

Thirty-nine personal letters opposed WSA status primarily because of mining and grazing impacts on naturalness. Some of the comments stated:

"this unit contains jeep trails for access to mining claims and other evidences of mining activity, and earthen dams, all detracting greatly from the naturalness of the area."

"trails and scars from mining activity are apparent."

"mineral activity that has taken place in the past, and that is active today. . . makes it impossible to completely get away from the presence of man's activity . . . Livestock improvements such as windmills, pipelines, water storage tanks, troughs, dirt tanks, corrals, and fences can be seen from nearly any point in the proposed wilderness."

Many of the opposing comments also addressed potential resource conflicts with mining and grazing. Resource conflicts are to be considered during the study phase of the wilderness review and have no bearing on the WSA decision.

Many of the comments (both pro and con) questioned the application of the road definition to access routes in the unit. Several individuals submitted new inventory information (maps, photographs, and legal descriptions). Additional field checks resulted in the following changes:

1. The access route northeast through Secs. 27, 22, and 23, T. 26 S., R. 8 W., does not meet the road definition. The route was mistakenly identified as a road in the intensive inventory.

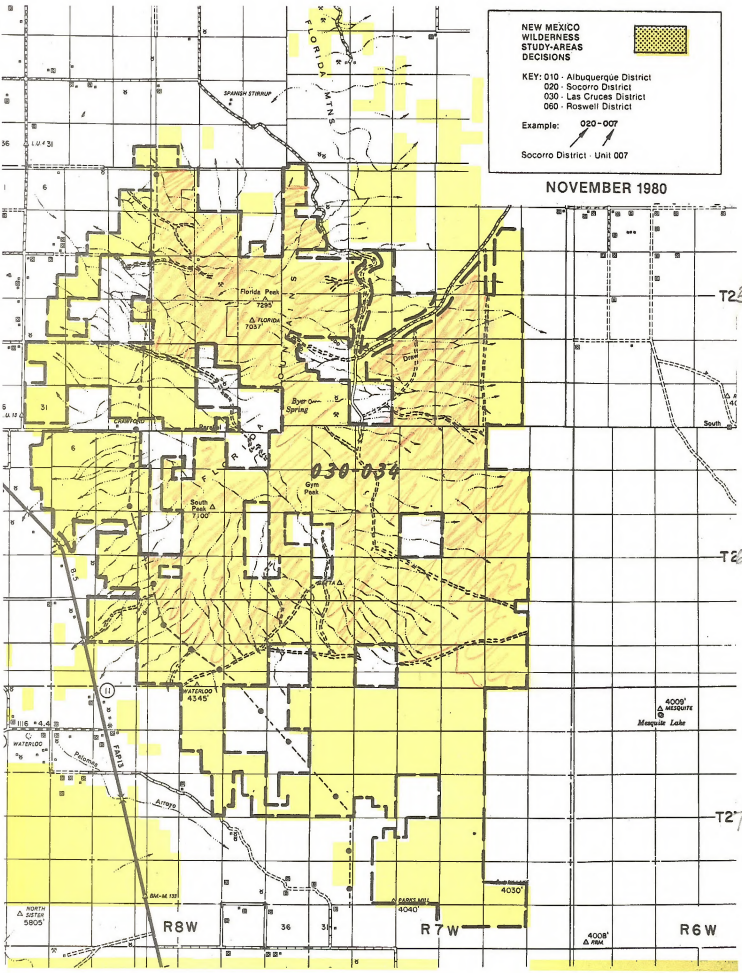
2. A road runs southwest from the SW¼, Sec. 30 to the NE¼, Sec. 31, T. 25 S., R. 7 W. This road was not identified in the intensive inventory.

3. A road runs north-northwest from the center of Sec. 25 and enters onto private land in the SW¼NW¼, Sec. 24, T. 26 S., R. 8 W. This road was not identified in the intensive inventory.

A reevaluation of the Floridas' wilderness characteristics, based on public comments, additional field checks, and all inventory information indicates that the wilderness quality of the unit is negated by mining activity and grazing improvements. There are twenty-one known unpatented mining claims within the boundaries of the originally proposed WSA. Numerous prospect pits, tunnels, shafts, and mine dumps are associated with these claims. Range improvements within the originally proposed WSA or along its boundaries include windmills, troughs, pipelines, developed springs, corrals, fences, and dirt tanks. Additionally, the configuration of the area is very irregular due to a combination of corridored roads and land status.

The BLM now feels that due to the cumulative effects of the impacts described above, the unit does not appear natural. Therefore, the unit is dropped from further wilderness consideration.

However, the Florida Mountains have long been recognized by the BLM as a special area in need of protection and careful management. Since 1969, BLM planning has identifed the Floridas' open space and primitive type values. Although the area does not meet the wilderness criteria, the Floridas merit some form of protection. As a direct result of the additional resource data gathered during the wilderness review, the BLM recognizes that the Florida Mountains have potential for an ACEC (Area of Critical Environmental Concern) designation and protective management. The area will be identified and considered during the Las Cruces/Lordsburg Resource Management Plan (RMP) which was initiated in the latter part of 1980.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NOVEMBER 1980
FLORIDA MTNS
SPANISH STIRRUP
Florida Peak
7295'
FLORIDA
7037'
Byer Spring
CARRIZOZO
Rarefel
030-034
Gym Peak
South Peak
7700'
WATERLOO
4345'
WATERLOO
Palomas
Arroyo
FAP13
NORTH SISTER
5805'
BM-M 131
PARKS MTN
4040'
4030'
4008'
RBM
4009'
MESQUITE
Mesquite Lake
South
T25S
T26S
T27S
R8W
R7W
R6W

Big Hatchet Mountains NM-030-035

Unit Acreage: 120,170
WSA Acreages: 46,230
14,480
5,240

Unit Description

Located 20 miles south of Hachita, N.M., this unit includes the Big Hatchet Mountains, and surrounding foothills and drainages. Rugged terrain coupled with broad canyons typify the unit. Elevation varies from 4400 feet to 8366 feet. Pinyon-juniper and mountain shrub occur at higher elevations while desert shrub, mesquite, and associated grassland communities occur in the lower canyons.

Wilderness Characteristics

SIZE: Of the 120,170 acres intensively inventoried, some 65,950 acres of public land are within the recommended WSA. The recommended WSA contains 2,080 acres of state and 90 acres of private inholdings.

NATURALNESS: The central portion of the unit recommended for further study generally appears natural. The number, size, and distribution of imprints (trails, fences, dirt tanks, old mines, retention dams, wildlife waters) are not substantially noticeable in the overall unit. Boundary adjustments would exclude northeastern and southwestern portions of the unit containing roads, jeep trails, and grazing improvements.

OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES: The unit contains outstanding opportunities for solitude and primitive and unconfined recreation. Due to a combination of large size, and topographic and vegetative screening, this unit provides ample opportunities to avoid the sights and sounds of others. The rugged, natural terrain and scenic and wildlife values provide excellent opportunities for dispersed recreation.

SUPPLEMENTAL VALUES: The Big Hatchets has the only healthy, wild, remnant, indigenous herd of desert bighorn sheep in the state. The unit also provides habitat for threatened and endangered flora and fauna and has high scenic qualities.

Final WSA Decision

Numerous public comments were received on the Big Hatchet Mountains unit. Fourteen comments opposed WSA status for the unit. About one-third of the opposing comments listed range improvements and mining activity as impacts on naturalness. One comment noted that due to the wildlife management problems of the desert bighorn sheep, they could hardly be considered a supplemental value. One of the comments questioned the application of the road definition to the route through Sheridan Canyon. A list of mining claims, photographs, road affidavits, and a detailed map were included.

Most of the opposing comments addressed resource conflicts; primarily oil and gas potential and hardrock minerals. Resource conflicts are considerations for the study phase of the wilderness review and have no bearing on the WSA decision.

Thirty-three personal letters supported WSA status for the Big Hatchets unit. The area was also included in the New Mexico Conservationist Wilderness Study Area Proposal and the Las Cruces District Conservationist Proposal. Size recommendations for the WSA varied from the BLM's proposed 65,950 acres to 80,000 acres. Most of the supporting comments concentrated on the outstanding opportunities for solitude and primitive recreation and the supplemental geological, scenic, and wildlife values of the Big Hatchets.

Several of the supporting comments questioned the application of the road definition to access routes in the northeast part of the unit. The comments indicated that the northeast portion "should be included in the WSA--this area is natural and would add outstanding diversity to the unit as a whole and represents one of the best opportunities for getting wilderness protection for an area of flat desert in New Mexico." Some of the supporting comments also addressed the route through Sheridan Canyon stating that the "way does not meet any of the BLM criteria as a road."

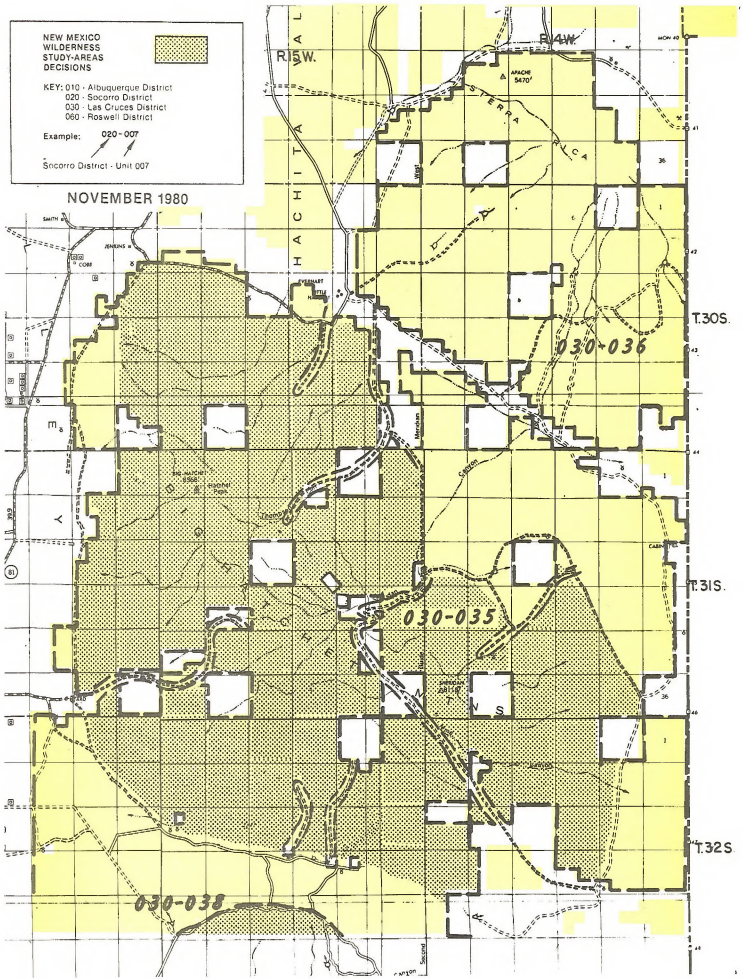
There was no information provided during the public review period to change the BLM's original analysis that the Big Hatchet Mountains have wilderness characteristics and should receive further wilderness study. However, the final decision on WSA boundaries was difficult and rested largely with the application of the road definition to the Sheridan Canyon route and the access routes in the northeast part of the unit.

After consideration of all inventory data and additional field checks, the BLM still judges the northeast portion of the inventory unit as lacking in wilderness characteristics. The routes separating the northeast area from the main part of the unit meet the road definition.

The most controversial route in the unit was the access through Sheridan Canyon. During the intensive inventory the BLM judged the Sheridan Canyon route as not meeting the road definition, however, the intensive inventory report (January 23, 1980) acknowledged that "Portions of the access route in Sheridan Canyon and SW to Mengus Tank are maintained by hand tools and used on a relatively regular basis but overall should be considered as a way." After careful consideration of all inventory data, road affidavits presented during the public review period, and additional site inspections, the BLM judges the Sheridan Canyon route as meeting the road definition.

The Sheridan Canyon road and the Hell-to-Finish Tank road (T. 32 S., R. 15 W., Secs. 11, 14, 15, and 22) divide the Big Hatchets unit into three roadless areas. Each of these areas is greater than 5,000 acres in size. The western roadless area contains approximately 46,230 acres of public land and 1,280 acres of state inholdings. The south-central roadless area contains 5,240 acres of public land. This area is bound on the west by the Hell-to-Finish Tank road and on the east by the Sheridan Canyon road and state land. The eastern roadless area contains 14,480 acres of public land and 640 acres of state inholdings. All three of these areas generally appear natural and offer outstanding opportunities for solitude and primitive and unconfined recreation.

Therefore, the three roadless areas as shown on the accompanying map are now Wilderness Study Areas.


NEW MEXICO
WILDERNESS
STUDY-AREAS
DECISIONS
KEY: 010 - Albuquerque District
020 - Socorro District
030 - Las Cruces District
060 - Roswell District
Example: 020-007
Socorro District - Unit 007
NOVEMBER 1980
R.15W.
R.14W.
T.30S.
T.31S.
T.32S.
030-036
030-035
030-038
HACHITA VAL
SIERRA RICA
APACHE 5470'
SMITH
JENKINS
COBB
EVERHART
Meridian
Canyon
Thomas
Second
Canton

Unit Description

This unit is located 10 miles SSE of Hachita, NM, and includes the Sierra Ricas and a mesquite-creosote covered basin to the south. The Sierra Ricas are a low mountain-rolling hills complex vegetated with desert shrub, cacti, and short grass. Elevation within the unit varies from 5,500' to 4,300'.

Wilderness Characteristics

SIZE: Roads verified in intensive inventory reduced the size of the unit to about 19,000 acres of public land. There are 640 acres of state inholdings.

NATURALNESS: The unit does not generally appear natural. Evidences of mineral exploration (test pits, shot holes, and shafts), 3 dirt tanks, a drill pad, and approximately 10 miles of jeep trails impact the naturalness of the unit. Although certain parts of the unit appear natural, when assessing the unit as a whole, it does not appear to have been affected primarily by nature's forces.

OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES: The unit does not contain outstanding opportunities for solitude or primitive and unconfined recreation. The lack of adequate topographic and vegetative screening combined with size result in less than outstanding opportunities for solitude. Recreational opportunities cannot be considered outstanding in terms of variety or the outstanding quality of any one opportunity.

SUPPLEMENTAL VALUES: There are no known supplemental values in the unit.

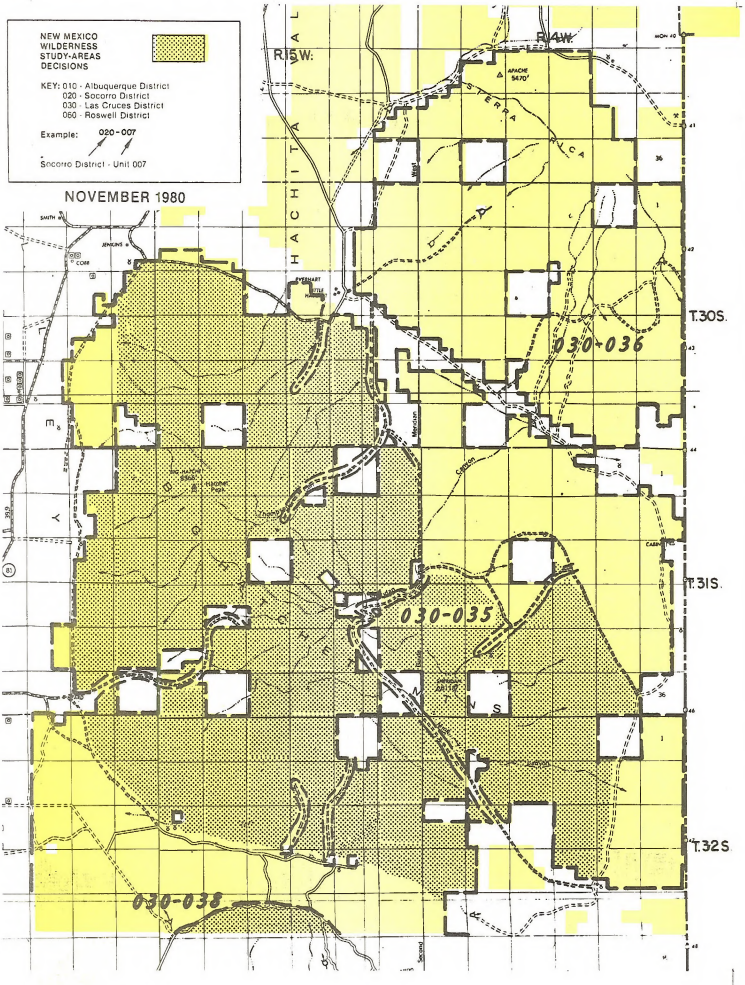
Final WSA Decision

Ten comments on the Sierra Rica unit were received during the public review period. Four of these comments listed the unit as having been inadequately inventoried for wilderness characteristics.

The New Mexico Conservationist Wilderness Study Area Proposal and the Las Cruces District Conservationist Proposal expressed support for a 15,000 acre WSA in the Sierra Rica inventory unit.

Three additional comments supported WSA status for the unit. The Sierra Ricas were described as "essentially natural" and "distinctive in composition, visual impact, and natural detail-one of the most exciting wilderness possibilities in the Las Cruces District."

The BLM's original recommendation states that the Sierra Rica unit does not qualify for wilderness study because it does not generally appear natural and opportunities for solitude or primitive forms of recreation are not outstanding. Since no new inventory information was received during the public review period, the Sierra Rica Mountains inventory unit is dropped from further wilderness consideration.


NEW MEXICO
WILDERNESS
STUDY-AREAS
DECISIONS
KEY: 010 - Albuquerque District
020 - Socorro District
030 - Las Cruces District
060 - Roswell District
Example: 020-007
Socorro District - Unit 007
NOVEMBER 1980
R.15W.
R.4W.
T.30S.
T.31S.
T.32S.
030-036
030-035
030-038
HACHITA VAL
SIERRA RICA
APACHE 5470'
SMITH
JENKINS
CORR
EVERHART
Mexican
Canyon
Second

Alamo Hueco Mountains NM-030-038 Unit Acreage: 12,540
WSA Acreage: 20,840

Unit Description

This unit is located 35 miles south of Hachita in the SW corner of the state, and includes a major portion of the Alamo Hueco Mountains and surrounding foothills and drainages. The topography is characterized by outcrops of bedrock that form vertical cliffs. Elevation varies from 4,700' to 6,417' at Pierce Peak. Vegetative cover is predominantly grasses with scattered mountain shrub and Juniper trees.

Wilderness Characteristics

SIZE: Identification of roads in intensive inventory expanded the northern boundary of the unit and deleted certain southern and eastern portions of the unit. The boundary adjustments increased the size of the unit to 20,840 acres of public land. There are 640 acres of state and 240 acres of private inholdings.

NATURALNESS: This unit appears natural. Imprints of man are limited (2 dirt tanks, 2 short access routes, windmill, tub, and earthen dike) and substantially unnoticeable in the unit as a whole.

OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES: The unit contains outstanding opportunities for solitude and primitive and unconfined recreation. The Alamo Huecos are very rugged, remote, and scenic. These qualities support opportunities to avoid the sights and sounds of others and also provide opportunities for dispersed recreation.

SUPPLEMENTAL VALUES: This unit contains significant cultural resources (rock art in picture cave), threatened and endangered plant species, and a variety of wildlife.

Final WSA Decision

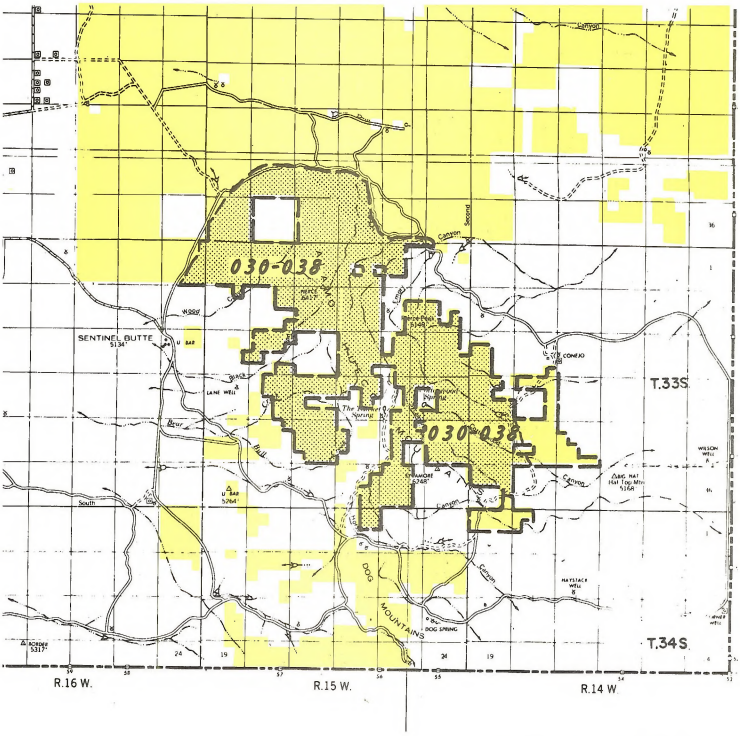
The BLM recommended that 20,840 acres of the Alamo Hueco Mountains unit be designated as a WSA. Public comment was received both in favor of and in opposition to this recommendation.

Comments opposing the WSA designation cited the existing range improvements and their associated ways as impacts on the naturalness of the unit. Other comments were that the land ownership pattern would make the unit unmanageable as a WSA. Several comments were received which identified this unit as having potential for oil and gas development which could not be realized if the area were to become a WSA. This type of resource conflict resolution will be dealt with in the study phase and is not addressed in the inventory phase of the wilderness review.

One comment suggested that wilderness designation would attract additional people into the area which would cause overuse and possible deterioration of the resource. This comment and other management and resource conflicts type comments will be retained and used in the study phase of the BLM's wilderness program.

Both the New Mexico Conservationist Wilderness Study Area Proposal and the Las Cruces District Conservationist Proposal support WSA designation of 20,840 acres. Several individual letters were received which recommended the unit for WSA designation. Most cited the 5,000 acre size criterion and naturalness criterion as reasons for WSA designation. Many other comments addressed the supplemental values within the unit. The specific comments noted the cultural values, the outstanding scenery, and the abundance of wildlife species.

After evaluation of the intensive inventory data and public comments, the BLM still considers the Alamo Hueco Mountains unit to contain wilderness characteristics. The few imprints of man within the unit do not adversely affect the unit's naturalness. Outstanding opportunities for solitude and primitive and unconfined recreation are present within the unit due to the rugged topography of the unit. Therefore, 20,840 acres of the Alamo Hueco Mountains unit are designated as a WSA.



MEXICO

NEW MEXICO
WILDERNESS
STUDY-AREAS
DECISIONS

KEY: 010 - Albuquerque District
020 - Socorro District
030 - Las Cruces District
060 - Roswell District

Example: 020-007

Socorro District - Unit 007

NOVEMBER 1980

Cedar Mountains NM-030-042 Unit Acreage: 205,216
WSA Acreage: 16,680

Unit Description

This unit, located approximately 20 miles SW of Deming, NM, is made up of the Cedar Mountains and surrounding rolling hills and flats. Vegetation types include desert shrub, cacti, shortgrasses, and very sparse juniper at higher elevations.

Wilderness Characteristics

SIZE: Numerous roads identified in intensive inventory dissect the unit, cutting it into less than 5,000 acre parcels.

NATURALNESS: The unit does not appear natural. Numerous imprints of man impact the unit. Seventeen windmills, fences, dirt tanks, erosion control dams, miles of buried pipeline, drinking tubs, jeep trails, and evidences of mining activity cumulatively and negatively impact the naturalness of the unit.

OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES: The unit lacks outstanding opportunities for solitude and primitive and unconfined recreation due to the number and location of imprints and lack of adequate topographic and vegetative screening.

SUPPLEMENTAL VALUES: There are no known supplemental values in the unit.

Final WSA Decision

After the start of the public review period, discrepancies were discovered in the mapping of some of the roads in the Cedar Mountains unit and in the calculation of acreages. Numerous roads dissect the unit, however, contrary to the discussion of size above, there are four roadless areas greater than 5,000 acres within the original 205,216 acre intensive inventory unit. Due to these discrepancies, a major re-evaluation of the unit's wilderness characteristics was necessary prior to formulating a final decision. The following is a short description of the wilderness characteristics of each of the four roadless areas.

The roadless area in the extreme western part of the unit is approximately 22,240 acres in size. Most of this roadless area consists of sparsely vegetated open desert plains with rougher terrain including Cedar Mountain to the north. Land status and cherry-stemmed roads result in an extremely irregular shaped configuration, especially in the northern part of the area. There are three windmills and five dirt stock tanks in the area. The area is marginally natural. Opportunities for solitude or primitive and unconfined recreation are not outstanding.

The northern part of unit 030-042 contains a 15,200 acre roadless area. The area consists of rolling creosote covered terrain cut by north-east trending drainages. The area is apparently natural with few imprints of man. Opportunities for solitude or primitive recreation are not outstanding.

The third roadless area is located in the central part of the unit. This area contains 6,480 acres of public land and consists of rolling terrain predominantly vegetated with creosote. The area contains numerous erosion control dikes. Due to the number and location of the dikes, they are substantially noticeable and negatively impact the overall naturalness of this roadless area.

The fourth roadless area is in the central and south-central part of the Cedar Mountains inventory unit. This roadless area is bound on the south by Highway 9 and on the north, east, and west by ranch roads. It contains the core of the Cedar Mountain range including portions of Hap Top Mountain, Old Baldy, and Flying W Mountain, along with drainages and flats to the northeast and south. This roadless area contains 28,240 acres of public land. The southern part of this area is impacted by range improvements and does not appear natural. Two cherry-stemmed roads run parallel north-northeast into the southern part of the area from Highway nine. Buried pipeline with associated water bars, and numerous erosion control dikes are located along these roads. Several dirt tanks and windmills are also located in the southern part of the area. However, an area of 16,680 acres in the mountainous portion of the roadless area appears natural and offers outstanding opportunities for solitude.

Numerous public comments were received on the Cedar Mountains unit. The unit was included in the New Mexico Conservationist WSA Proposal and the Las Cruces District Conservationist Proposal. Comments favoring WSA designation for some portion of the unit indicated sizes from 25,000 acres to 100,000 acres. Only one of these comments included a map of proposed WSA boundaries. This specific comment failed to recognize numerous range improvements, erosion control dams, jeep trails, and roads. Other comments listed the outstanding opportunities for solitude and primitive recreation and the scientific supplemental values of a biological ecotone along the Mexican border as supporting reasons for a WSA designation.

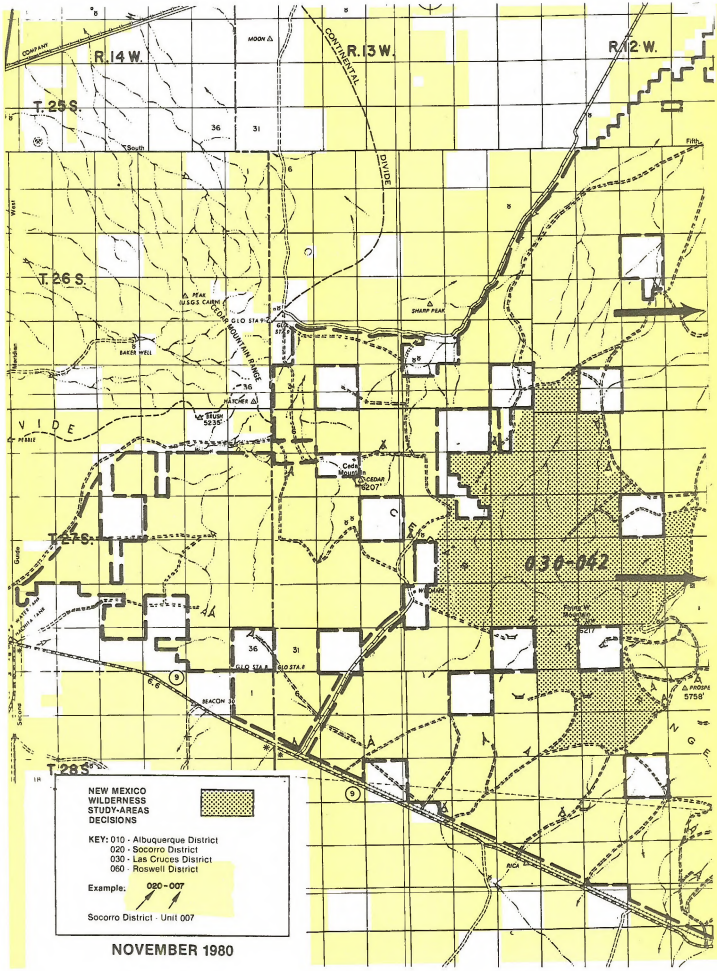
Many of the individuals opposing WSA status for the Cedar Mountains unit were upset that the unit was being re-evaluated for wilderness characteristics. One comment stated, "It was my understanding once a unit had been dropped from Intensive Inventory it could not be put into Wilderness Study". The original proposal to drop the entire unit from further study was a recommendation only, subject to change based on additional information obtained during the public review period.

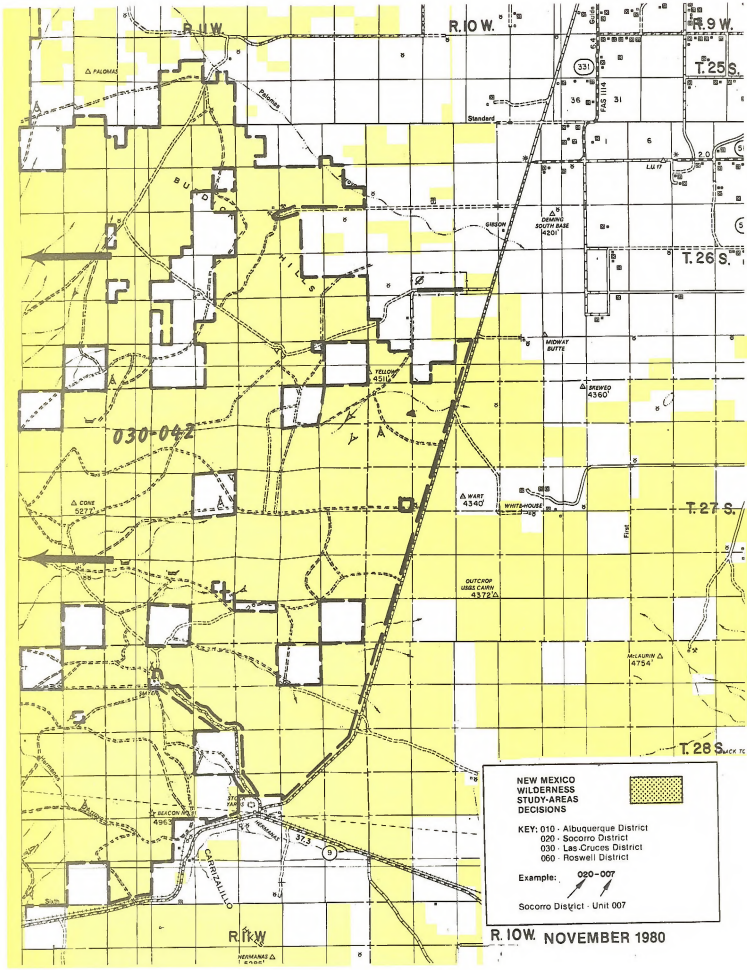
The more specific opposing comments concentrated on the impacts of extensive range improvements on the naturalness of the area. The comments described the numerous stock waters, fences, spreader

dikes, windmills, powerlines, corrals, troughs, and pipelines in the unit. Another comment stated that although portions of the area have recently been found to be roadless and greater than 5,000 acres. "The unit still fails to meet the two most important requisites of naturalness and provision of outstanding opportunities for solitude and primitive recreation".

Resource and use conflicts were also discussed in most of the opposing comments. Statements such as: wilderness designation "will put ranchers out of the competitive market" typified many of the comments on grazing conflicts. Other comments expressed concern that rockhounds and the elderly would be prevented use of the area. These are not considerations for the inventory phase of the wilderness review and have no bearing on the WSA decision.

After careful consideration of public comment, further field checks, and re-evaluation of all inventory data, the BLM finds that although most of the original 205,216 acre Cedar Mountains unit is disected by roads and heavily impacted by range improvements, a portion of the unit has wilderness characteristics. Therefore, an area of 16,680 acres of public land located in the central part of the Cedar Mountain range is now a WSA.


R.14 W.
R.13 W.
R.12 W.
T.25 S.
T.26 S.
T.27 S.
T.28 S.
CONTINENTAL DIVIDE
MOON
SHARP PEAK
BAKER WELL
BEACON
CEDAR VALLEY
CEDAR SPRING
RICE
030-042
NEW MEXICO WILDERNESS STUDY-AREAS DECISIONS
KEY: 010 - Albuquerque District
020 - Socorro District
030 - Las Cruces District
060 - Roswell District
Example: 020 - 007
Socorro District - Unit 007
NOVEMBER 1980


R.11W.
R.10W.
R.9W.
T.25S.
T.26S.
T.27S.
T.28S.
R.11W
R.10W.
PALOMAS
Palomas
Standard
FAS 1114
331
36
31
6
1
2.0
LU 17
GIBSON
DEMING SOUTH BASE 4201'
MIDWAY BUTTE
YELLOW 4511'
SKEWED 4360'
030-042
CONE 5277'
WART 4340'
WHITE-HOUSE
OUTCROP USGS CAIRN 4372'
McLAURIN 4754'
BEACON HILL 4963'
STOCK TANKS
HERMANAS
CARRIZALILLO
HERMANAS
NEW MEXICO WILDERNESS STUDY-AREAS DECISIONS
KEY: 010 - Albuquerque District
020 - Socorro District
030 - Las Cruces District
060 - Roswell District
Example: 020-007
Socorro District - Unit 007
NOVEMBER 1980

East Potrillo Mountains NM-030-051 Unit Acreage: 26,300

Unit Description

This unit consists of the East Potrillo Mountains and portions of the surrounding alluvial plain. The East Potrillos are sparsely vegetated, rugged, and steep. The mountains rise more than 1000 feet above mesquite dunes and creosote flats to the west and southwest.

Wilderness Characteristics

SIZE: This unit contains 26,300 acres of public land and 2,560 acres of state inholdings.

NATURALNESS: This unit lacks naturalness. The eastern slopes of the mountains are severely impacted by 2 marble mines, 2 drill pads, and a jeep trail. Several mines, mineral test pits, and access trails are located on the western and northern slopes. Two dirt tanks, a tub and pipeline, and approximately 8 miles of jeep trail are located in the gently rolling dunes west and SW of the mountains. The cumulative impacts of the imprints of man are substantially noticeable in the unit as a whole.

OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES: The East Potrillos are a long, narrow range of mountains running through the eastern third of the unit. Outstanding opportunities for backcountry recreational experiences such as hiking, backpacking, and hunting are available within the mountainous portion of the unit.

The unit offers only limited opportunities for avoiding the evidences of other people in the unit. The majority of the unit consists of gently sloping mesquite dunes and flats which are highly visible from the mountain range. The topographic screening in relation to the unit's size does not provide outstanding opportunities for solitude.

SUPPLEMENTAL VALUES: Caves in the unit exhibit evidences of pre-Columbian American-Indian habitation.

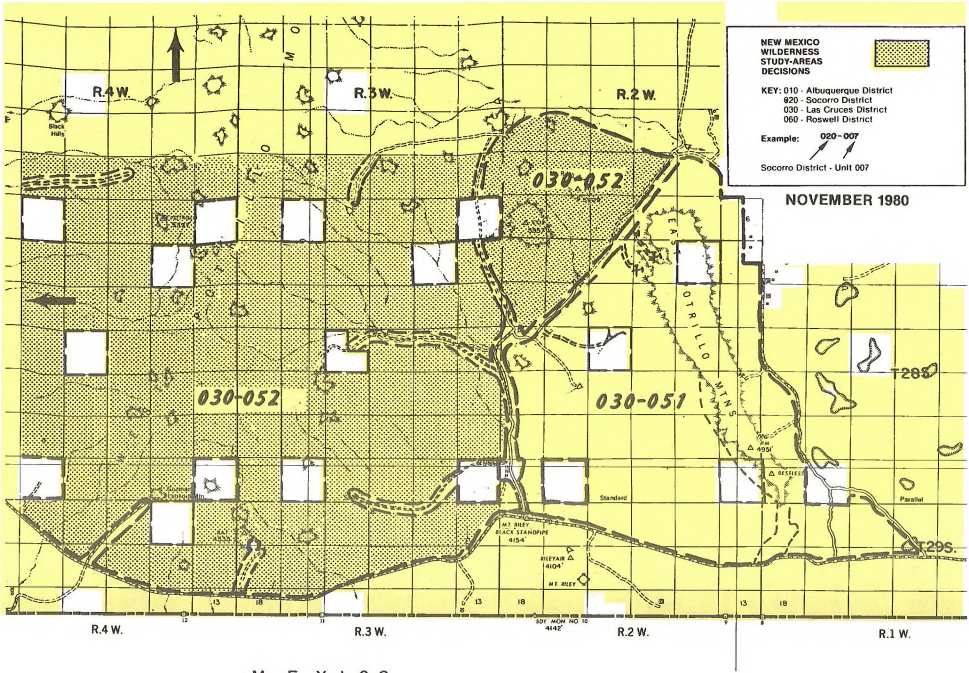
Final WSA Decision

Eight public comments supporting WSA status for the East Potrillos were received during the public review period. The New Mexico Conservationist Wilderness Study Area Proposal and the Las Cruces District Conservationist Proposal also endorsed the unit. Size recommendations for the proposed WSA varied from "over 5,000 acres" to 15,000 acres, 21,000 acres, and 23,000 acres. Supporting reasons included naturalness and outstanding opportunities for solitude and primitive and unconfined recreation. One comment restated the specific hiking, backpacking, and hunting opportunities and cultural values acknowledged in the BLM's intensive inventory report.

Two comments opposed WSA designation for the unit. Range improvements, extensive fencing, mines, and prospect pits were noted as substantially noticeable impacts on the unit's naturalness. Ranches, improvements, roads, and air traffic outside of the unit were cited as negative impacts on naturalness and solitude. The impacts of outside sights and sounds, however, are generally considered during wilderness study. Opportunities for hiking and hunting, in contrast to the BLM's evaluation, were described as "limited". Other opposing reasons included lack of supplemental values and the impossibility of rehabilitating the mine dumps and prospect holes within the unit.

Future management problems and resource conflicts with wilderness were also identified. One comment noted that "almost 10 percent of the area in the unit is state land and this will cause problems regarding access and activities within the unit". The New Mexico State Highway Department identified the area as a possible location for surfacing and/or borrow pits if an all-weather highway from Columbus to Anapra is ever constructed. Both of these conflicts were not considered at this time and have no bearing on the WSA decision.

The BLM orginally proposed that the East Potrillo Mountains did not qualify for wilderness study. This proposal was based on the judgement that the naturalness of the unit is cumulatively impacted by jeep trails, range improvements, and mining activity. Public comment revealed no new inventory information. Therefore, the unit is dropped from further wilderness consideration.


NEW MEXICO
WILDERNESS
STUDY-AREAS
DECISIONS
KEY: 010 - Albuquerque District
020 - Socorro District
030 - Las Cruces District
060 - Roswell District
Example: 020-007
Socorro District - Unit 007
NOVEMBER 1980
030-052
030-052
030-051
R.4 W.
R.3 W.
R.2 W.
R.1 W.
T28S.
T29S.
Black Hills
OTRILLO MTNS.
Standard
Parallel
MT. RILEY
BLACK STANDPIPE
4154'
RILEY AIR
4104'
MT. RILEY
BDY. MON. NO. 10
4142'
MEXICO

West Potrillo Mountains NM-030-052 Unit Acreage: 280,200
WSA Acreages: 143,145
7,400

Unit Description

This unit is located 40 miles southwest of Las Cruces, NM, and contains the West Potrillo Mountains, Mount Riley, and portions of the surrounding alluvial-filled desert basin. The West Potrillos are a north-south trending series of low volcanic cinder cones. The topography is undulating and discontinuous. Maximum relief is about 1,000 feet above the desert basin. Vegetation is sparse and ranges from creosote-mesquite to desert shrub-grass types as the elevation increases.

Wilderness Characteristics

SIZE: Roads identified in inventory divided unit #030-052 into ten roadless areas; six are greater than 5,000 acres. Four of the roadless areas are located in the northwestern and western parts of the inventory unit. The Mount Riley roadless area is located in the eastern part of the unit. The large roadless area located in the central, mountainous portion of the unit contains wilderness characteristics. The proposed WSA contains 131,745 acres of public land. There are 9,080 acres of state and 100 acres of private inholdings within the proposed WSA.

NATURALNESS: All six of the roadless areas greater than 5,000 acres in size generally appear natural. The proposed WSA in the central part of the unit contains 13 dirt tanks and 60 miles of jeep trail. Due to the vast size and varied topography of the proposed WSA, the cumulative impacts of these imprints are not substantially noticeable.

OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES: The large size, configuration, and varied topography of the proposed WSA provide outstanding opportunities for solitude. Outstanding recreation opportunities include hiking, back-packing, photography, and geological sightseeing.

The 4 areas in the northwestern and western parts of the unit and the Mount Riley area lack outstanding opportunities. In all of these areas the combinations of sparse vegetative screening, inadequate topographic screening, and/or size and configuration reduce opportunities to avoid the sights and sounds of others. Recreation opportunities lack the diversity and quality of opportunities available in the recommended WSA.

SUPPLEMENTAL VALUES: The recommended WSA contains geological supplemental values.

Final WSA Decision

The BLM orginally proposed that a 131,745 acre portion of the West Potrillos intensive inventory unit be designated a WSA. Roadless, natural portions of the original inventory unit to the northwest and west of the proposed WSA as well as the Mount Riley roadless area (NM-030-052C) were recommended to be dropped from further wilderness consideration. This recommendation was based on the judgement that these areas lack outstanding opportunities for solitude or primitive recreation. During the public review period, numerous public comments were received on the BLM proposal.

Both the New Mexico Conservationist Wilderness Study Area Proposal and the Las Cruces District Conservationist Proposal supported WSA status for the West Potrillos. Thirty-one personal letters were also received in support of the area. However, many of the comments indicated the WSA should be larger. Specific size recommendations for the WSA varied from 180,000 acres to 225,000 acres. Many of the comments supported WSA status for the Mount Riley roadless area (east of the proposed WSA) and the Eagle Nest roadless area (west of the proposed WSA). The comments also indicated that the portion of unit #030-052 to the north of Mount Riley between the Aden Lava Flow and the West Potrillo Mountains should be included in the WSA. This area is partially separated from the proposed WSA by a jeep trail.

Other comments cited the naturalness of the area and the outstanding opportunities for solitude and primitive recreation. These opportunities are considered outstanding due to the area's large size, diverse topography, proximity to large population centers, and dispersed access points that prevent concentration of visitors. In addition to geological supplemental values, one comment characterized the area as "an excellent example of Chihuahuan desert biota characteristic of Southern New Mexico, West Texas, and northern Mexico of which practically none is protected." The West Potrillos were described as vast and unspoiled, "truly an area of national significance . . . would be one of the premier units in the National Wilderness Preservation System."

Thirty-one personal letters opposing WSA status for the unit, as well as 654 copies of a form letter opposing both the West Potrillos and Aden Lava Flow proposed WSAs were received. Comments opposing WSA status for the West Potrillos cited roads, range improvements, and jeep trails as impacts on naturalness. Opportunities for solitude were described as less than outstanding due to the outside sights and sounds of the Southern Pacific Railroad, Interstate 10, and the low level crossings of military aircraft. The effects of the imprints of man outside of a unit will be considered during the study phase of the wilderness review and have no bearing on the WSA decision. Other comments on solitude and recreation opportunities discussed the sparse vegetation and lack of topographic screening the unit.

Approximately half of the comments opposing the WSA proposal addressed resource conflicts, management concerns, or study considerations. Aggregate minerals, oil and gas potential, geothermal energy potential, and grazing were identified as resource conflicts. The statement that "the adverse economic impact that such a designation could have on the entire Southern New Mexico region simply does not warrant consideration of lands that os obviously lack of Wilderness Area characteristics" typified the general concerns about resource conflicts. There was also concern that wilderness designation would "hinder, in the future, the use of the large water basin in these areas by the City of Las Cruces and Dona Ana County" and prevent access to the elderly and the handicapped. Issues of this type (resource conflicts, management considerations) are to be considered during the study phase of the wilderness review through the BLM's land-use planning system. These issues have no bearing on the WSA decision.

Many of the comments opposing WSA status for the West Potrillos questioned the application of the road definition to several access routes witin the unit. The road vs. jeep trail controversies combined with the public support for significant acreage additions to the WSA made the location of final boundaries difficult. Several additional field trips were made to the area to look at the access routes in question and to reevaluate the wilderness characteristics of the Eagle Nest and Mount Riley roadless areas and the area north of Mount Riley.

The access route running generally east-west through the northern part of the proposed WSA from Salty Well (T. 25 S., R. 3 W., NE corner of Sec. 29) to Biggs Wells (T. 25 S., R. 4 W., SW¼ Sec. 15) was judged as meeting the road definition. The road deletes an area of approximatley 4,000 acres from the proposed WSA.

The following three access routes through the central portion of the proposed WSA were also controversial:

1. From Brook Well (Sec. 25, T. 26 S., R. 3 W.) to Government Tank (Sec. 1, T. 27 S., R. 4 W.) and then north-northwest to West Tub (Sec. 14, T. 26 S., R. 4 W.)

2. From Mary's Tank (Sec. 28, T. 27 S., R. 3 W.) west to Eppenauer Windmill (Sec. 29, T. 27 S., R. 4 W.)

3. From Sec. 5, T. 27 S., R. 3 W., south to Sec. 19, T. 27 S., R. 3 W., (This route connects routes 1 and 2 above)

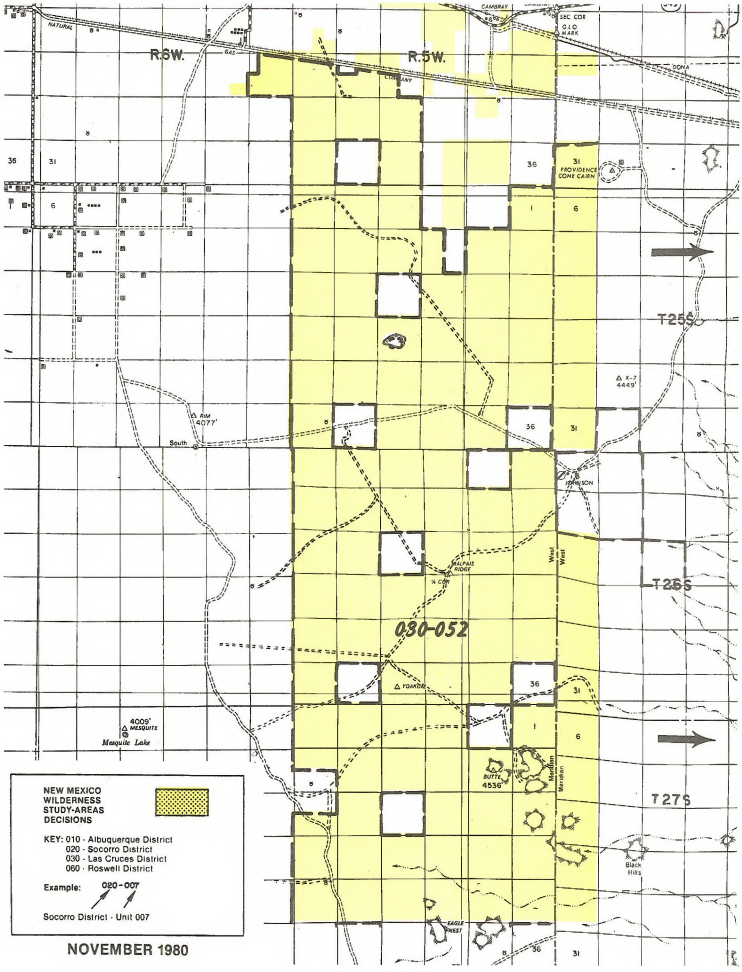
There are no signs of original construction by mechanical means along any of these 3 routes. They do not meet the road definition.

Additional field checks of the Eagle Nest roadless area to the west of the proposed WSA did not change the BLM's evaluation of wilderness characteristics. The area does not offer outstanding opportunities for solitude or primitive recreation.

However, additional field checks of Mount Riley and the area to the north confirmed the public comments that these areas have wilderness characteristics. The Mount Riley roadless area is 7,400 acres in size, almost pristine, and offers outstanding opprotunities for solitude.

The area north of Mount Riley is also natural and because it is contiguous to the central roadless part of the unit it should have been included in the originally proposed WSA boundaries.

After careful consideration of all inventory data, and extensive consultation and coordination with the public, the BLM finds that an area of 143, 145 acres in the West Potrillo Mountains inventory unit has wilderness characteristics and is now a WSA (NM-030-052A). The Mount Riley area also has wilderness characteristics and is a separate WSA (NM-030-052C) of 7,400 acres.


R.8W.
R.5W.
T25S
T26S
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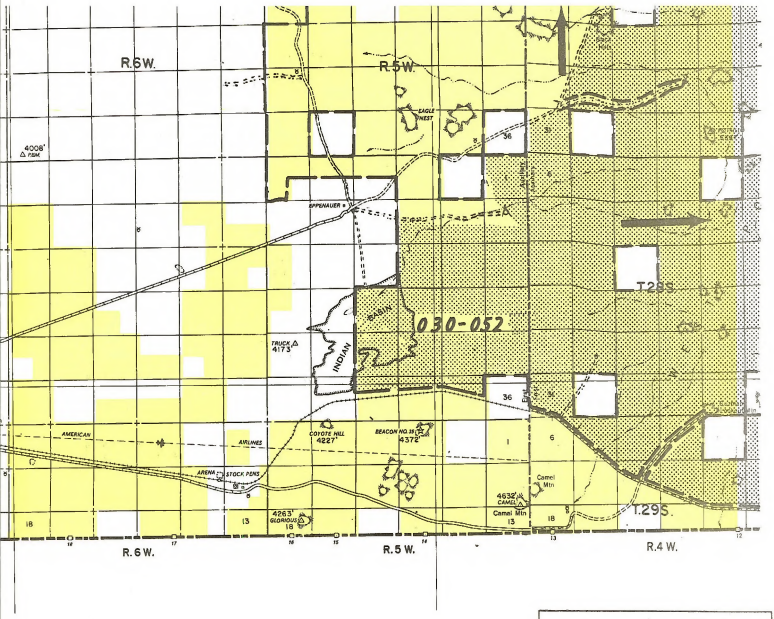

MEXICO

NEW MEXICO WILDERNESS STUDY-AREAS DECISIONS

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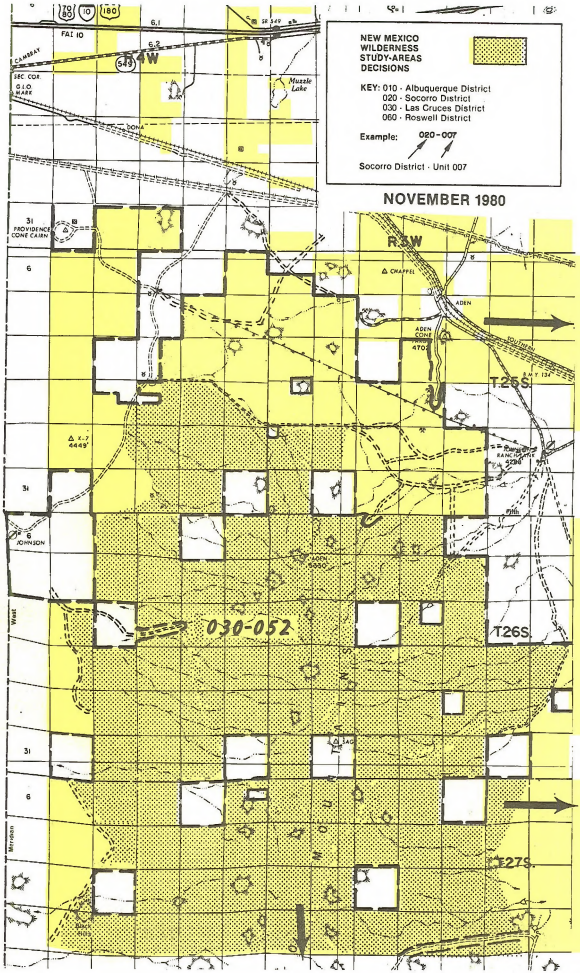
060 - Roswell District

Example: 020-007

Socorro District - Unit 007

NOVEMBER 1980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DECISIONS
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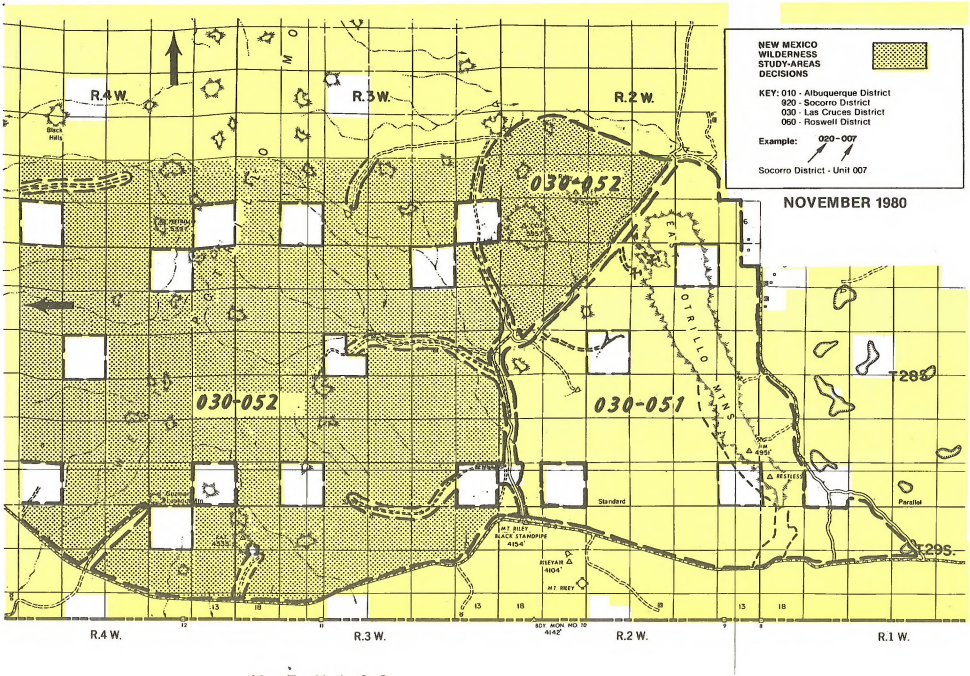
020 - Socorro District
030 - Las Cruces District
060 - Roswell District
Example: 020-007
Socorro District - Unit 007
NOVEMBER 1980
FAI 10
CAMBRAY
SEC. COR.
G.L.O. MARK
4W
Muzzle Lake
DONA
PROVIDENCE CONE CABIN
R.3W
CHAPPEL
ADEN
ADEN CONE
4705
SOUTHERN
T.26S.
X-7
4449'
JOHNSON
030-052
T.26S.
T.27S.
West
Meridian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Socorro District - Unit 007
NOVEMBER 1980
R.4 W.
R.3 W.
R.2 W.
R.1 W.
030-052
030-052
030-051
OTRILLO MTNS.
T28S
T29S
Standard
Parallel
MT. RILEY
BLACK STANDPIPE
4154'
RILEYAIR
4104'
MT. RILEY
BOY MON NO. 10
4142'
MEXICO

Aden Lava Flow NM-030-053 Unit Acreage: 33,010
WSA Acreage: 24,725

Unit Description

This unit is located 25 air miles southwest of Las Cruces, NM. The majority of the unit consists of a basaltic pressure ridge, sinks, spatter cones, and other depressions typical of lava flow physiography. The southeastern portion of the unit is characterized by flat, sedimented lava features with little vegetation other than grass and small shrubs.

Wilderness Characteristics

SIZE: The proposed WSA contains 24,790 acres of public land and 1,280 acres of state inholdings. Recommended boundary adjustments along the northeastern, northwestern, western, and southern boundaries of the unit would exclude roads and portions of the unit lacking naturalness.

NATURALNESS: This unit generally appears natural. Imprints of man within the recommended WSA (access routes into Aden Crater and 4 miles of jeep trail in the southeast part of the unit) are not substantially noticeable in the unit as a whole. The portions of the unit excluded by the recommended boundary adjustments contain access routes, 4 drinking tubs and troughs, a pipeline, transmission line, corral, storage tank ("The Tub"), and the developments at Johnson Stockade.

OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES: The unit contains outstanding opportunities for solitude. The varied topographic features of the majority of the unit as well as the large size provide outstanding opportunities to avoid the sights and sounds of others. Recreational opportunities could include hiking, backpacking, nature study, and spelunking, but are not considered outstanding.

SUPPLEMENTAL VALUES: The northeast portion of the Aden Lava Flow (4,008 acres) was formally designated as a Research Natural Area in the Federal Register on November 2, 1978.

Final WSA Decision

The BLM originally proposed that a major portion of the Aden Lava Flow intensive inventory unit be designated a WSA. The recommended WSA boundaries excluded roads and range improvements along the edges of the lava flow. Numerous public comments were received both in favor of and in opposition to the BLM proposal.

Both the New Mexico Conservationist Wilderness Study Area Proposal and the Las Cruces District Conservationist Proposal supported WSA status for the Aden Lava Flow. Most of the personal letters favoring WSA status for the unit agreed with the BLM recommendation. Supporting reasons included the large size and apparent naturalness of the area and outstanding opportunities for solitude and primitive forms of recreation. The ecological and geological aspects of the lava flow were listed as supplemental values.

Numerous personal letters opposing WSA status for the unit, as well as 653 copies of a form letter opposing both the Aden Lava Flow and the West Potrillo Mountains proposed WSAs were received during the public review period.

Comments opposing WSA status for the Aden Lava Flow cited range improvements and jeep trails as impacts on the naturalness of the area. Opportunities for solitude were described as less than outstanding due to the outside sights and sounds of the Southern Pacific Railroad, Interstate 10, and the low level crossings of military aircraft. The effects of the imprints of man outside of a unit will be considered during the study phase of the wilderness review and have no bearing on the WSA decision. More appropriate comments on solitude and recreation opportunities discussed the "sparse vegetation" and "stark terrain" of the unit.

Most of the comments opposing the WSA proposal addressed resource conflicts, management concerns, or study considerations. Aggregate minerals, oil and gas potential, geothermal energy potential, and grazing were identified as resource conflicts. The statement that "the adverse economic impact that such a designation could have on the entire Southern New Mexico region simply does not warrant consideration of lands that so obviously lack of Wilderness Area characteristics" typifies the general concerns about resource conflicts. Other comments included: there is "no physical evidence that current use by the public has damaged or even created great change in the ecology in the last 30-50 years" and "if you call attention to Aden Crater as a wilderness recreational area . . . will surely cause destruction . . . unless you are willing to commit the manpower and money to adequately police the tourists . . ." Another comment suggested that instead of a WSA designation the Research Natural Area (RNA) could be expanded or the area could be designated an Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC). Issues of this type (resource conflict, management considerations, and alternative forms of protection) are to be considered during the study phase of the wilderness review through the BLM's land-use planning systems. These issues have no bearing on the WSA decision.

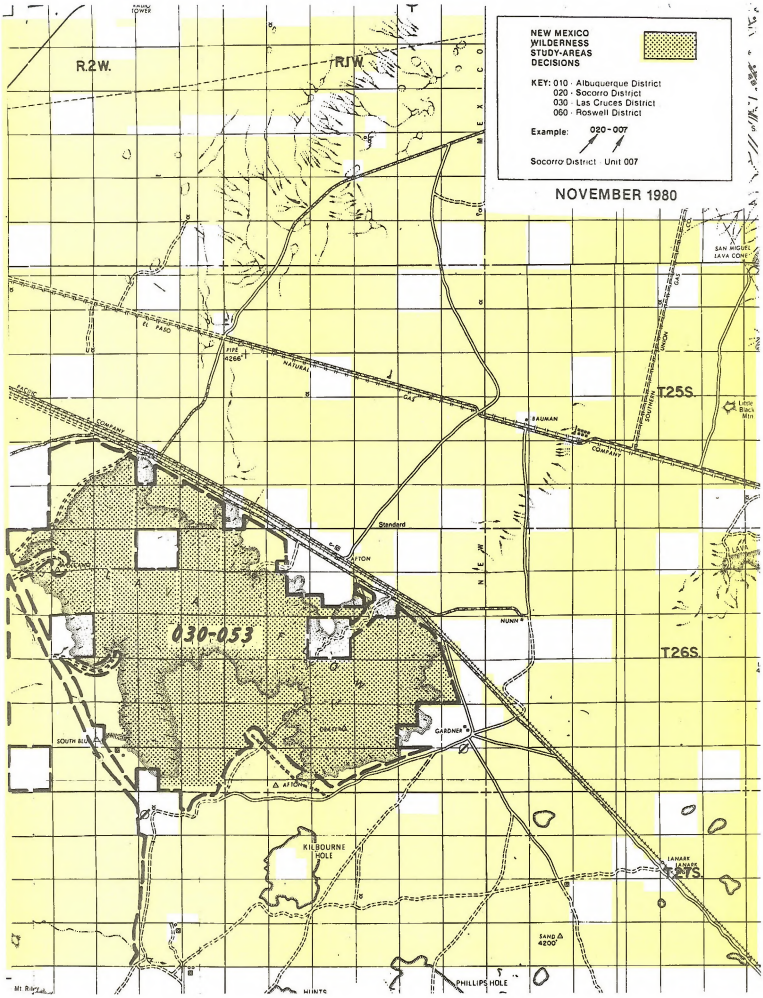
Several comments on the Aden Lava Flow questioned the application of the road definition to two access routes within the inventory unit. The comments included maps and detailed narratives. Based on the public comments and additional field checks the access route into Aden Crater from the northwest boundary (Secs. 5 and 8, T. 26 S., R. 2 W.) was determined to be a road.

The access route through the southeast part of the unit (Secs. 10, 15, 16, 20, 21, 29, 30, and 31, T. 26 S., R. 1 W.) was also controversial. Additional field examinations of the route revealed that portions of the route meet the road definition. The portion of the route running southwest to Norwood Well through Secs. 10, 15, and 16 shows signs of deliberate construction and maintenance. The road is now corridored to Norwood Well in state Section 16. From the southern boundary in Sec. 31, T. 26 S., R. 1 W., north-northeast to the southeast corner of Sec. 30, the route meets the road definition. Another road runs

southeast from the southeast corner of Sec. 30 through Secs. 32 and 33 to the southern boundary of the unit. Boundary adjustments to exclude these roads deleted a small amount of acreage from the unit.

After additional field examinations of controversial access routes and consideration of all inventory data and public comments, the BLM judges the Aden Lava Flow as having the requisite wilderness characteristics for a WSA. Several fencelines and approximately 5 miles of jeep trail are the only imprints of man within the WSA boundary. The area appears natural and offers outstanding opportunities for solitude.

The Aden Lava Flow wilderness Study Area contains 24,725 acres of BLM land. There are 640 acres of state inholdings.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Example: 020-007
Socorro District - Unit 007
NOVEMBER 1980
R.2W.
R.1W.
T.25S.
T.26S.
T.27S.
030-053
EL PASO
NATURAL
GAS
PACIFIC
COMPANY
BAUMAN
COMPANY
SOUTHERN
UNION
GAS
SAN MIGUEL
LAVA CONE
Little
Black
Mtn
Standard
AFTON
NUNN
GARDNER
CRATER
SOUTH BLUE
KILBOURNE
HOLE
LANARK
SAND
4200'
PHILLIPS HOLE
HUNTS
Mt. Riley

Robledo Mountains NM-030-063 Unit Acreage: 38,670
WSA Acreage: 11,640

Unit Description

This unit is located 3 miles northwest of Las Cruces, NM, just west of the Rio Grande. The Robledos, a small chain of rugged volcanic mountains, are in the northeast part of the unit, the Rough and Ready Hills to the northwest, and Corralitos Plateau, a flat mesa south of Indian Spring Canyon. Vegetation consists of grass associations in the mountainous terrain and creosote in the flat lands.

Wilderness Characteristics

SIZE: Due to a revised estimate, this unit has been found to contain 38,590 acres of public land. There are no State or private inholdings.

NATURALNESS: The unit does not generally appear natural. Approximately 40 miles of jeep trail dissect the unit. Four dirt tanks, a windmill, and 3 drinking troughs are also in the unit. Although there are portions of the unit that remain natural, the cumulative impacts of the imprints of man (especially ORV trails) are substantially noticeable when considering the unit as a whole.

OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES: The unit lacks outstanding opportunities for solitude or primitive and unconfined recreation. Only the central portion of the unit appears natural. The configuration of this portion of the unit is very irregular due to the corridored road to Lookout Peak. This factor coupled with the severe ORV impacts in the southeast and northwest limit opportunities for solitude or primitive and unconfined recreation.

SUPPLEMENTAL VALUES: The unit contains historical, cultural, and geological supplemental values. There are also caves in the unit.

Final WSA Decision

Since the beginning of the intensive inventory, the determination of wilderness characteristics in the Robledo Mountains unit has been difficult. The southeast part of the unit is heavily impacted by jeep trails and frequented by ORV enthusiasts. The western portions of the unit contain range improvements and jeep trails. The central portions of the unit appear natural, but the northern part of the natural portion is almost cut off by the corridored road to Lookout Peak. Originally, the BLM proposed to drop the area from further wilderness consideration based on the cumulative effects of jeep trails, range developments, and the unit's configuration on wilderness characteristics.

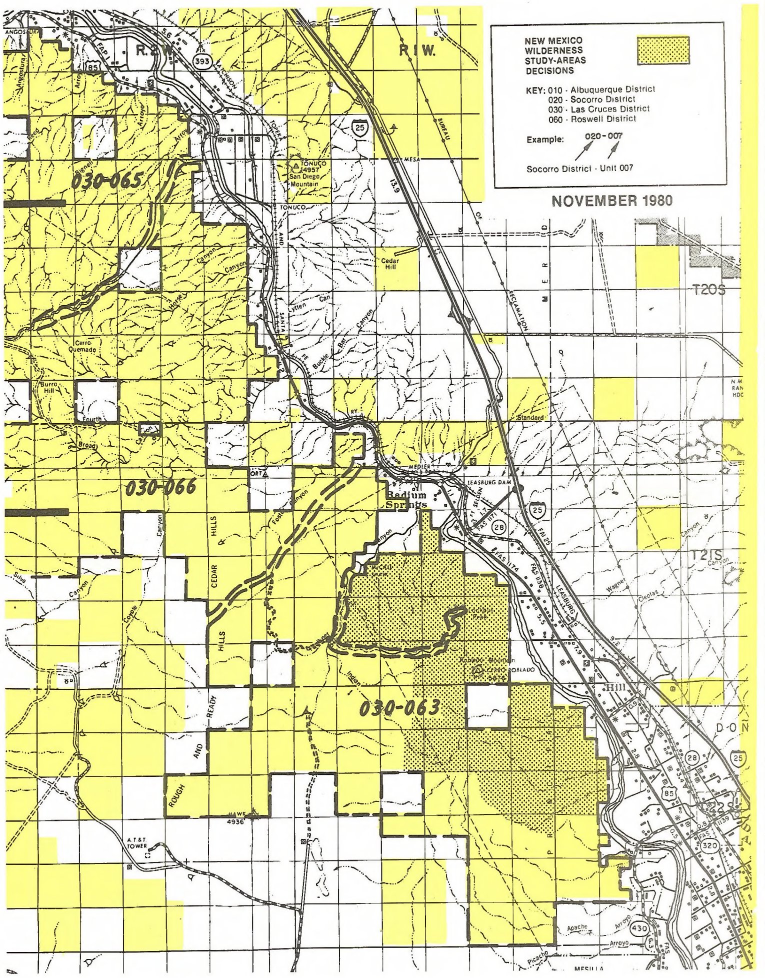
The analysis of public comments revealed concern over the BLM's evaluation of the Robledos' wilderness characteristics (especially naturalness) and support for WSA designation of part of the unit. The unit was included in the New Mexico Conservationist WSA Proposal and the Las Cruces District Conservationists Proposal. Some of the specific comments stated that the BLM's evaluation showed "a tendency to report that the entire unit is intruded when in actuality only part of the area is intruded", "most of this area is in pristine condition," and "the unit generally appears natural".

Sizes for the proposed WSA varied from 8,500 acres to 42,000 acres. Several of the comments included maps with proposed boundaries. Other supporting reasons included outstanding opportunities for solitude and primitive recreation due to the topographic screening offered by the many hills and drainages and the "many areas within this unit which are totally isolated from the outside world". Many supplemental values were listed, including: the unit's proximity to Las Cruces, the outstanding variety of ecotypes found in the unit, and the uncommon plant species and birds observed in the area.

Four individuals indicated a need for more information before they could make comments and suggested the area be re-inventoried.

Most of the comments opposing WSA status for the Robledo Mountains cited range improvements, jeep trails, and mining activity as negatively impacting the naturalness of the area and detracting from opportunities for solitude or primitive recreation. One very detailed report was received that included a listing of man-made imprints within the area and legal descriptions. The list included marble quarrying operations, jeep trails, stock waters, fences and roads. Many of these imprints (especially the mines) are in the north-west part of the unit which is not contiguous to the rest of the unit after adjusting boundaries to exclude roads. The remaining imprints listed are primarily in the western part of the unit. No new inventory information was included. The report also included detailed analyses of the quality of opportunities for solitude or primitive recreation in the unit. The comment states that opportunities for solitude are not outstanding due to the small size and irregular shape of the natural portion of the unit, lack of effective vegetative and topographic screening, and the accessibility of the unit. The comment goes on to say that opportunities for primitive recreation are not outstanding because of the small size of the natural portion of the area, the lack of unusually interesting plant life, wildlife viewing opportunities, or geological formations, and the lack of challenge for climbers.

A re-evaluation of the Robledo's wilderness characteristics, based on public comments, additional field checks, and inventory information indicates that a portion of the unit has wilderness characteristics. An area of approximately 11,640 acres surrounding Lookout Peak and Robledo Mountain generally appears natural and offers outstanding opportunities for solitude. This part of the Robledo Mountains inventory unit is now a WSA.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030-066
030-063
R.2W.
R.1W.
T20S
T21S
Radium Springs
LEASBURG DAM
Cerro Quemado
Burro Hill
Cedar Hill
TONUCO
San Diego Mountain
Robledo Mountain
ROUGH AND READY HILLS
CEDAR HILLS
A.T.&T. TOWER
MESILLA
ANGOSTURA

Las Uvas Mountains NM-030-065 Unit Acreage: 37,760
WSA Acreage: 10,680

Unit Description

This unit is located 2 miles south of Hatch, NM, and contains the Las Uvas Mountains. The Las Uvas are composed of tilted bedded volcanic rock with a gentle western slope and cliffs on the east side. Vegetation varies from desert shrubs, yucca, and creosote at lower elevations to juniper and grasses at higher elevations.

Wilderness Characteristics

SIZE: Roads identified in inventory reduced the size of the unit to 23,860 acres of public land. There are 40 acres of private and 1,280 acres of state inholdings.

NATURALNESS: The unit lacks naturalness. Twelve miles of jeep trail and tenmiles of corridored roads (includes Rustler Fire Break) disect the unit. Additionally 14 dirt tanks, corrals, a windmill, and an area of historic terracing are in the unit. These imprints cumulatively and negatively impact the overall naturalness of the unit.

OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES: The unit lacks outstanding opportunities for solitude and primitive and unconfined recreation. Due to the location and number of developments, the spider web of corridored roads and trails, and the resulting irregular configuration, opportunities are considered less than outstanding.

SUPPLEMENTAL VALUES: There are no known supplemental values in the unit.

Final WSA Decision

The determination of wilderness characteristics in the Las Uvas inventory unit has been especially difficult and controversial.

The BLM has long been aware of the special scenic and backcountry recreational values of the Las Uvas Mountains. The "Management Framework Plan Las Uvas Planning Unit Information Brochure", June 1976 outlines the following land use decision.

> "Manage the Las Uvas Mountains, in a manner which will perpetuate their relatively unintruded, remote, and scenic characteristics". "The purpose of the recommendation is to require that all future developments, AMP (allotment management plan) related or otherwise, be carefully designed and constructed to avoid impairment of the scenic and recreational values of these mountains".

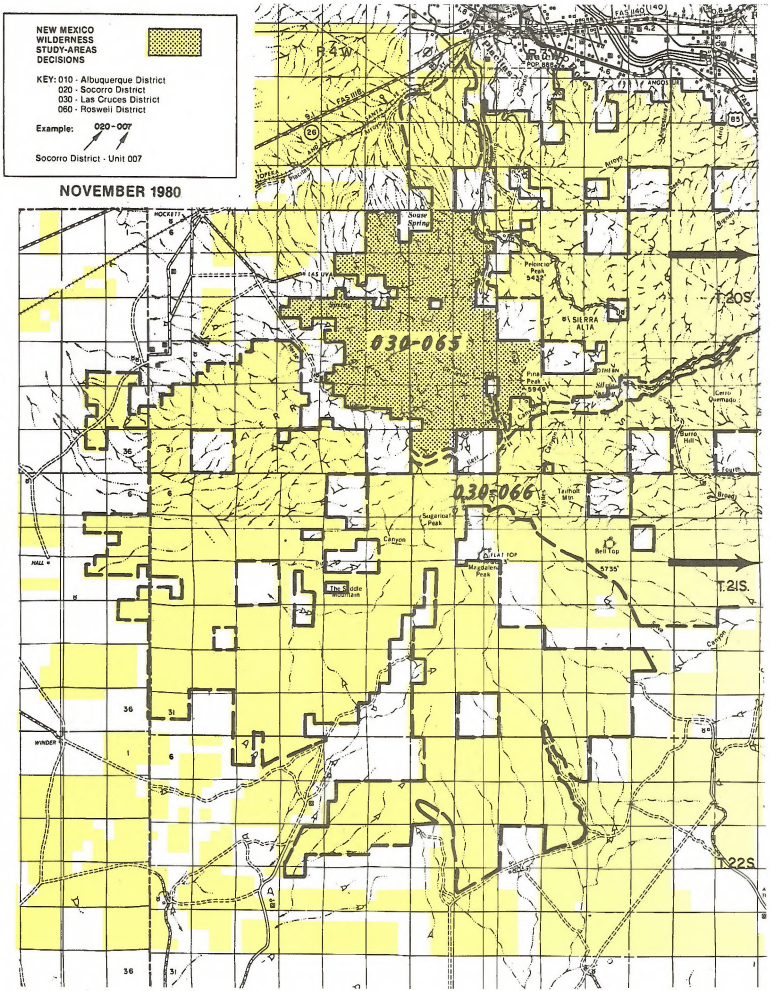
The wilderness inventory recognized these values, but also identified numerous man-made intrusions. Boundary adjustments to exclude roads identified in the intensive inventory reduced the size of the unit from 37,760 acres to 23,860 acres. Range improvements impact the naturalness of the area especially in the eastern half of the unit. The rugged western part of the unit is less impacted by range improvements. The controversial Rustler Fire Trail protrudes into the core of the western half of the unit. The BLM originally judged the Fire Trail as meeting the road definition. Due to the number and location of imprints, jeep trails, and roads combined with the resulting configuration of the unit, the BLM proposed to drop the entire unit from further wilderness consideration.

Numerous personal contacts made during the public review period and the analysis of public comments revealed controversy over the BLM's recommendation to drop the entire unit. The application of the road definition to the Rustler Fire Trail and the BLM's evaluation of wilderness characteristics in the west half of the unit were questioned. Comments indicated that an area of approximatley 10,000 acres surrounding the Fire Trail should be a WSA. The final WSA decision rested largely with the application of the road definition to the Rustler Fire Trail and a re-evaluation of the Trail's effects on apparent naturalness and outstanding opportunities.

The BLM built the Rustler Fire Trail by heavy machinery in 1971. The trail bears NNW from the Barksdale Road (the southern boundary of the unit) to provide access to the Chivatos Canyon tank in the SE¼, Sec. 20, T. 20 S., R. 3 W. The Trail continues on up the canyon and climbs the steep face of a bluff. It fans out into three separate dead-end trails on top. Other than some maintenance done in 1973, the BLM has not done or authorized any additional work on the Rustler Fire Trail. The permittee submitted an affidavit in December 1979 stating that he and others have performed mechanical maintenance on the Trail. In July 1980, a letter was sent to the permittee requesting more information on the times, significance, and nature of any maintenance he had performed. No response has been received.

Additional site inspections of the Rustler Fire Trail show that the use and maintenance of the route as far as Chivatos Tank in Sec. 20 is apparent and this part of the Trail meets the road definition. However, once past the tank, the quality of the route degenerates and there are no obvious signs of maintenance. Past Chivatos Tank, the route generally appears to be returning to a natural condition and does not meet the road definition.

The western portion of the unit, if considered separately from the rest of the unit generally appears natural. The only major imprint of man's work is the Rustler Fire Trail which is slowly being revegetated through natural processes. The area is greater than 5,000 acres and meets the size criterion. Due to the rugged topography, outstanding opportunities for solitude and primitive recreation are available. A 10,680 acre area in the western portion of the Las Uvas inventory unit contains wilderness characteristics and is now a WSA.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030-066
T.20S.
T.21S.
T.22S.
R.4W.
Sugar Spring
Pyramid Peak 5432'
SIERRA ALTA
Pina Peak 5595'
Burro Hill
Sugarloaf Peak
Cerro
Bell Top
5735'
Magdalena Peak
The Saddle
Tailholt Mtn.
Cerro Quemado
HALL
WINDER
HOCKETT
TOPEZ
Rd.
Trail
Ranch
Spring
Canyon
Draw
Mesa
Ridge
Peak
Mtn.
Hill
Tank
Fence
Corral
Cabin
Windmill
Pipeline
Road
Trail
Fence
Boundary
Section
Township
Range
Meridian
Baseline
Elevation
Contour
Stream
Creek
Arroyo
Valley
Mountain
Forest
Service
Land
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Private
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Uranium
Recreation
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Historic
Cultural
Archaeological
Paleontological
Wildlife
Habitat
Fish
Riparian
Vegetation
Soil
Water
Air
Quality
Noise
Socioeconomic
Impact
Analysis
Cumulative
Impact
Irreversible
Irretrievable
Commitment
Resource
Conflict
Resolution
Coordination
Consultation
Review
Agency
Tribal
Local
Government
Interest
Group
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Act
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Policy
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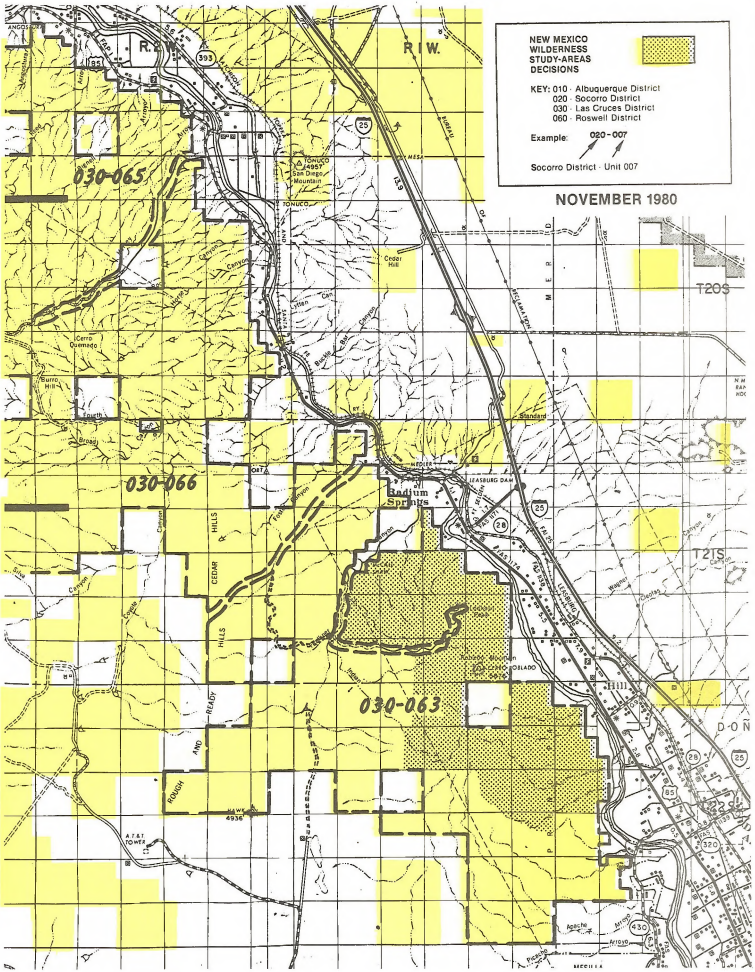
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LEASBURG DAM
TONUCO
Cedar Hill
Cerro Quemado
Burro Hill
Standard
CEDAR HILLS
ROUGH AND READY HILLS
A.T.&T. TOWER
Hill
D-O-Ñ

Magdalena Peak NM-030-066 Unit Acreage: 82,247

Unit Description

Located approximately 20 miles NW of Las Cruces, NM, the unit consists of the volcanic ridges and canyons of the southern and western Uvas Mountains. Vegetation varies from desert shrub and shortgrass to juniper and grasses in higher elevations.

Wilderness Characteristics

SIZE: Roads identified in inventory divided this unit into numerous areas, five of which are greater than 5,000 acres.

NATURALNESS: All five roadless areas lack naturalness. Numerous range improvements (dirt stock tanks, pipeline scars, drinking tubs, drift fences) are found throughout. There are also numerous jeep trails in the unit which provide access to these developments. These imprints cumulatively and negatively impact the naturalness of the unit.

OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES: This unit lacks outstanding opportunities for solitude and primitive and unconfined recreation. Due to the irregular configurations of the areas (a result of corridored roads and ownership patterns) and their small sizes, combined with the number and location of improvements, outstanding opportunities are lacking.

SUPPLEMENTAL VALUES: There are no known supplemental values in the unit.

Final WSA Decision

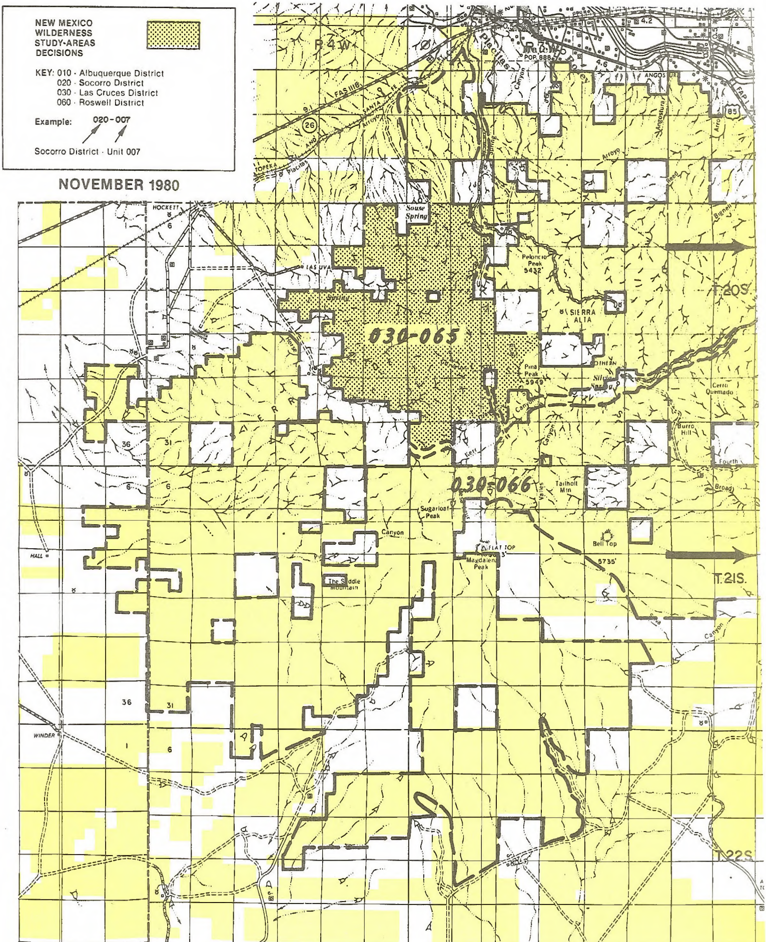
The BLM recommended that Magdalena Peak unit be dropped from further wilderness review. Public comments were received both in support and in opposition to this recommendation.

Four people felt the unit received an inadequate inventory. They expressed a need for more information before being able to make comments. These comments were made in a form letter type format which listed this unit and others not recommended as WSA's.

The one site specific comment which is considered to support WSA status for this unit said that "there is possibly some areas within the unit" which meet the WSA criteria, "BLM should carefully reconsider". However, no suggestions of where these areas might be or other supporting information was received.

Several comments were received opposing WSA status. They cited range improvements and their associated roads and trails as impacts on naturalness. Two comments cited the configuration of the remaining roadless areas as limiting opportunities for solitude or primitive and unconfined recreation to less than outstanding.

The comments received during the public review period contained no new inventory information. After a careful evaluation of the intensive inventory data and the public comments received, the BLM still considers the Magdalena Peak unit to lack wilderness characteristics. The works of man are substantially noticeable within this unit. These imprints cumulatively and negatively impact the naturalness of the unit. Due to the irregular configurations of the remaining roadless areas and their small size, combined with number and location of improvements, outstanding opportunities for solitude and primitive and unconfined recreation are lacking. Therefore, the Magdalena Peak unit is dropped from further wilderness consideration.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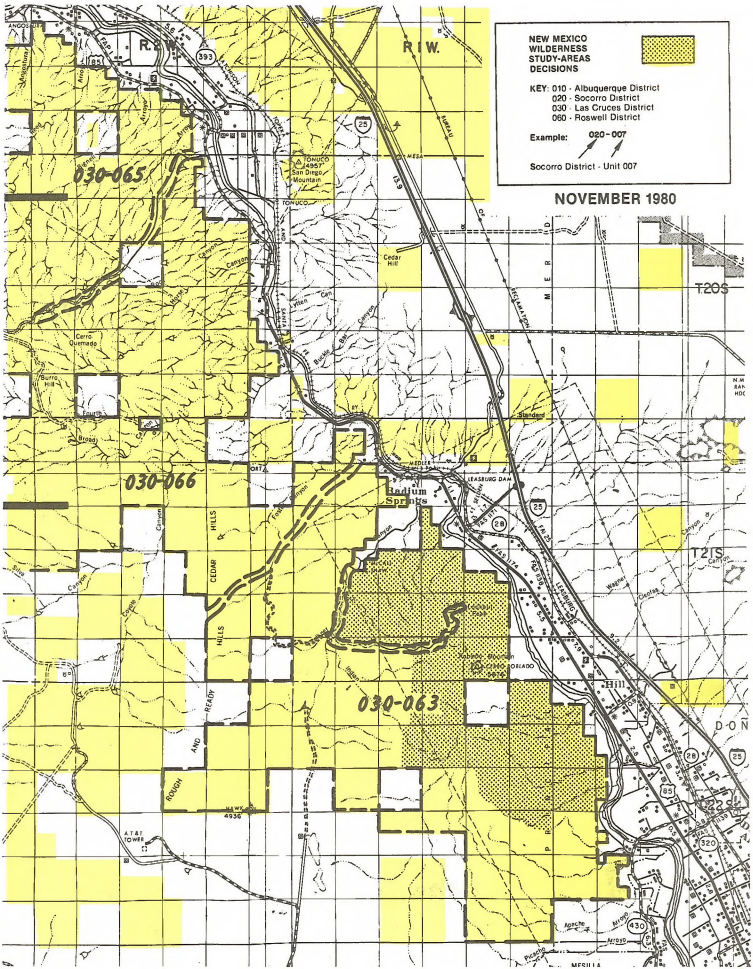
020 - Socorro District
030 - Las Cruces District
060 - Roswell District
Example: 020-007
Socorro District - Unit 007
NOVEMBER 1980
030-065
030-066
Souse Spring
Peloncio Peak 5432'
SIERRA ALTA
Pina Peak 5949'
Cerro Quemado
Burro Hill
Tailholt Mtn
Sugarloaf Peak
FLAT TOP
Magdalena Peak
Bell Top
5735'
The Saddle Mountain
T.20S.
T.21S.
T.22S.
HOCKETT
HALL
WINDER
R 4 W
TOPEKA
FAS 1116
POP. 888
ANGOSTURA
85


NEW MEXICO WILDERNESS STUDY-AREAS DECISIONS
KEY: 010 - Albuquerque District
020 - Socorro District
030 - Las Cruces District
060 - Roswell District
Example: 020-007
Socorro District - Unit 007
NOVEMBER 1980
030-065
030-066
030-063
R.2 W.
R.1 W.
T20S
T21S
Radium Springs
Cedar Hill
Cerro Quemado
Burro Hill
Hill
LEASBURG DAM
CEDAR HILLS
ROUGH AND READY HILLS
TONUCO
San Diego Mountain
A.T.&T. TOWER
MESILLA

Organ Mountains (Formerly Mine House Springs) NM-030-074 Unit Acreage: 7,710 WSA Acreage: 7,200

Unit Description

This unit is 15 miles east of Las Cruces, NM, south of Highway 70 and the town of Organ. The unit contains the northern Organ Mountains and bordering alluvial fans. The Organs are characterized by rugged rock outcrops and massive, jagged vertical intrusions. Elevation ranges from 5,000 feet to 9,012 feet. Vegetation includes 4 life zones; the Lower and Upper Sonoran, Transition, and Canadian. Cacti, grasses, sotol, yucca, browse plants and bushes, oak, pine, spruce, and juniper are among the approximately 800 species that occur in the area.

Wilderness Characteristics

SIZE: Boundary adjustments were made to exclude roads, mines, and a portion of the unit lacking naturalness. The recommended WSA contains 7,200 acres of public land. There are no state or private inholdings.

NATURALNESS: This unit generally appears natural. Imprints of man within the recommended WSA include the Baylor Pass National Recreation Trail (4.65 miles), fencing, gates, recreation signs, and one dirt detention dam. The cumulative impact of these imprints is not substantially noticeable in the unit as a whole. The portion of the unit excluded by the boundary adjustments contains the Aguirre Spring Campground woodyard, powerlines, 2 mines, the Baylor Pass Trail parking area, and roads in the southern tip of the unit.

OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES: This unit contains outstanding opportunities for solitude and primitive and unconfined recreation. Rugged topography and the wide variety of vegetation provide ample screening for solitude. The unit offers an outstanding diversity in types of recreation: hiking, backpacking, mountain and rock climbing, sightseeing, and rockhounding opportunities are abundant.

SUPPLEMENTAL VALUES: This unit contains scenic, biological, and geological supplemental values.

Final WSA Decision

The BLM recommended that the Mine House Spring intensive inventory unit be designated as a WSA. Public comments were received both in favor of and in opposition to the BLM recommendation.

Comments opposing WSA status stressed outside sights and sounds and resource conflicts. One comment was that outside sights and sounds "spill over into the unit, so that imprints are physically present within the boundaries of much of the unit". A comment was made that "a recreation trail, fencing, gates, recreation signs, and a dirt detention dam all seriously detract from the wilderness characteristics". Another comment suggested that there is a lack of solitude because of the existing high recreation use of the area. Another comment stated "This area is also the south end of the Organ Mining District, where there are known deposits of silver, lead, zinc, gold, copper, bismuth, florite, barite, clay, and magnesite".

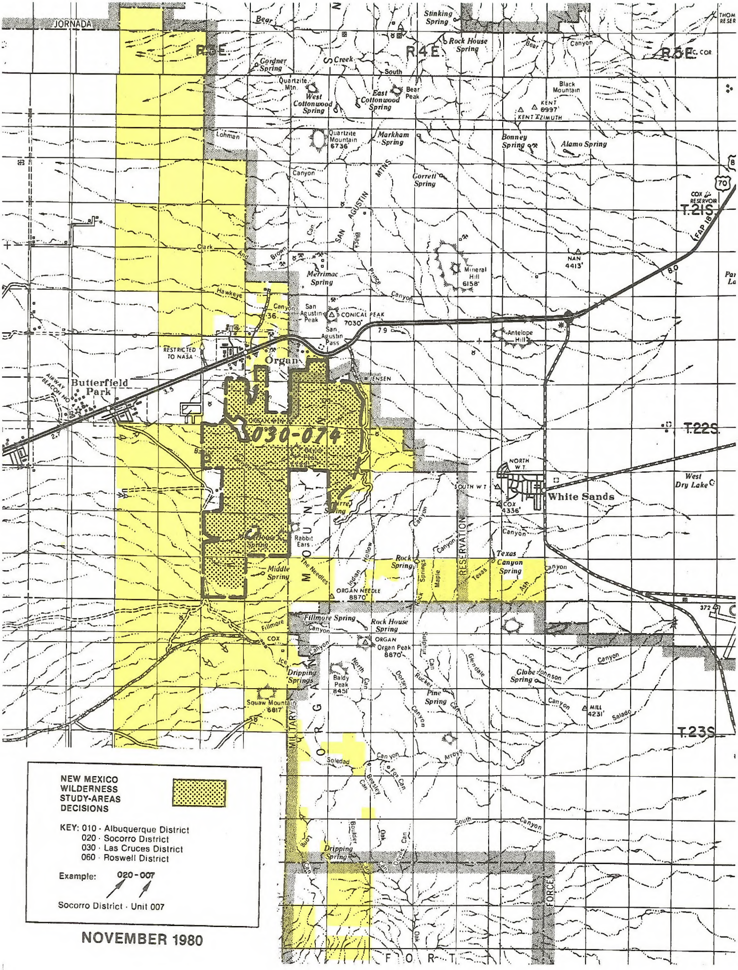
The effects of sights and sounds outside an area on wilderness characteristics and resource conflicts have no bearing on the WSA decision. The comments concerning resource conflicts will be retained and used during the study phase.

Both the New Mexico Conservationist Wilderness Study Area Proposal and the Las Cruces District Conservationist Proposal endorsed the WSA boundaries for the Mine House Spring unit.

Individual comments identified the unit's naturalness and opportunities for solitude and primitive recreation as being outstanding. Several comments were received on the unit's supplemental values of "rugged scenery" and the presence of endangered species endemic to the area.

After a careful evaluation of the intensive inventory information and the public comments, the BLM still considers the Mine House Spring unit to contain wilderness characteristics. The minimal imprints of man's work within the unit are substantially unnoticeable within the unit as a whole and do not detract from the unit's naturalness.

Therefore, the Mine House Spring unit is now a WSA. The area will be named the Organ Mountains Wilderness Study Area.


NEW MEXICO
WILDERNESS
STUDY-AREAS
DECISIONS
KEY: 010 - Albuquerque District
020 - Socorro District
030 - Las Cruces District
060 - Roswell District
Example: 020-007
Socorro District - Unit 007
NOVEMBER 1980
030-074
JORNADA
R.3E.
R.4E.
R.5E.
T.21S.
T.22S.
T.23S.
Organ
Butterfield Park
White Sands
RESTRICTED TO NASA
SAN AGUSTIN MTNS
CONICAL PEAK 7030'
San Agustin Pass
San Agustin Peak
Quartzite Mountain 6736'
Mineral Hill 6158'
Antelope Hill
ORGAN NEEDLE 8870'
ORGAN Organ Peak 8870'
Baldy Peak 8451'
Squaw Mountain 6817'
Rabbit Ears
The Needles
Stinking Spring
Rock House Spring
Gordner Spring
West Cottonwood Spring
East Cottonwood Spring
Markham Spring
Bonney Spring
Alamo Spring
Gorrell Spring
Merrimac Spring
Middle Spring
Rock Spring
Texas Canyon Spring
Fillmore Spring
Dripping Springs
Pine Spring
Globe Spring
Dripping Spring
West Dry Lake
Black Mountain
MILITARY
RESERVATION
FORCE
F O R T
70
80
372

Potter NM-030-086 Unit Acreage: 8,535

Unit Description

This area is located approximately 30 miles east of Truth or Consequences, New Mexico on the western slopes of the San Andres Mountains. It is characterized by limestone strata hills cut by east-west trending canyons. Vegetation types include creosote in the western flats, desert grassland in the intermediate zones, and pinyon-juniper in the upper elevations.

Wilderness Characteristics

SIZE: Potter contains 8,535 acres of public land. There are no state or private inholdings.

NATURALNESS: Potter does not generally appear natural. Almost every major canyon in the unit is impacted by a jeep trail. A total of 5 jeep trails, 3 dirt tanks, 2 steel storage tanks, a building, and a set of holding pens are found in the unit. The cumulative impacts of these imprints are substantially noticeable in the unit as a whole.

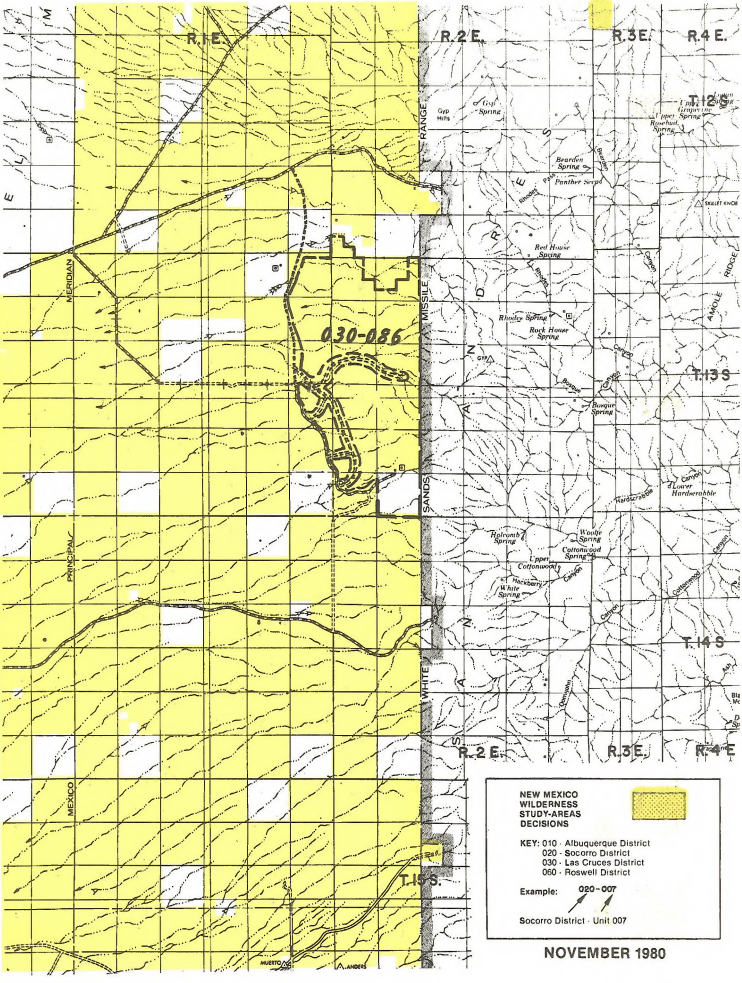
OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES: The unit lacks outstanding opportunities for solitude and primitive and unconfined recreation. Visitors to the unit would find it difficult to avoid the sights and sounds of man around the numerous range developments in the central and southern parts of the unit. That portion of the unit that is undeveloped is too small to provide outstanding opportunities for solitude or primitive and unconfined recreation.

SUPPLEMENTAL VALUES: There are no known supplemental values within the unit.

Final WSA Decision

During the public comment period several comments were received and personal contacts were made opposing WSA status for Potter. Reasons for the opposition were based on numerous roads, trails, and range developments within the area. Comments also identified the lack of opportunities for solitude or recreation. No comments were received supporting WSA status for Potter.

The Bureau recommended that Potter be dropped from further wilderness study. Since the information received during the public comment period reinforced the Bureau's recommendation and no further information was received to change the recommendation Potter is dropped from further wilderness consideration.


R.1E.
R.2E.
R.3E.
R.4E.
T.12S.
T.13S.
T.14S.
T.15S.
030-086
NEW MEXICO WILDERNESS STUDY-AREAS DECISIONS
KEY: 010 - Albuquerque District
020 - Socorro District
030 - Las Cruces District
060 - Roswell District
Example: 020-007
Socorro District - Unit 007
NOVEMBER 1980

Sacramento Escarpment	NM-030-104B	Unit Acreage: 5,320
Bug Scuffle Canyon	NM-030-165	Unit Acreage: 5,720
		WSA Acreage: 3,510

Unit Description

The Sacramento Escarpment and Bug Scuffle Canyon are located south of Alamogordo, New Mexico. The southern portion of the Bug Scuffle Canyon unit enters the McGregor Military Reservation. Both units are contiguous with the United States Forest Service RARE II Area #3-072, West Face of the Sacramento Mountains. The Forest Service has identified #3-072 as having wilderness characteristics and has designated the area for further study.

Wilderness Characteristics

SIZE: Boundary adjustments made during intensive inventory resulted in dropping 2,450 acres of the Escarpment's original 5,320 acres and dropping 5,080 acres of Bug Scuffle's original 5,720 acres. These adjustments were made to exclude unnatural portions, areas lacking outstanding opportunities for solitude or recreation, and to rectify illogical segments of the boundary.

NATURALNESS: The portions of these units recommended for further wilderness study appear natural. Boundary adjustments made during intensive inventory and as a result of public comment have excluded dirt tanks, roads, jeep trails, pipelines, and a windmill.

OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES: Four major canyons cut the Sacramento Escarpment. Even though the acreage is small, outstanding opportunities for solitude and primitive forms of recreation can be found in these canyons. Consideration of this area in conjunction with the FS-RARE II Area #3-072 increases these available opportunities.

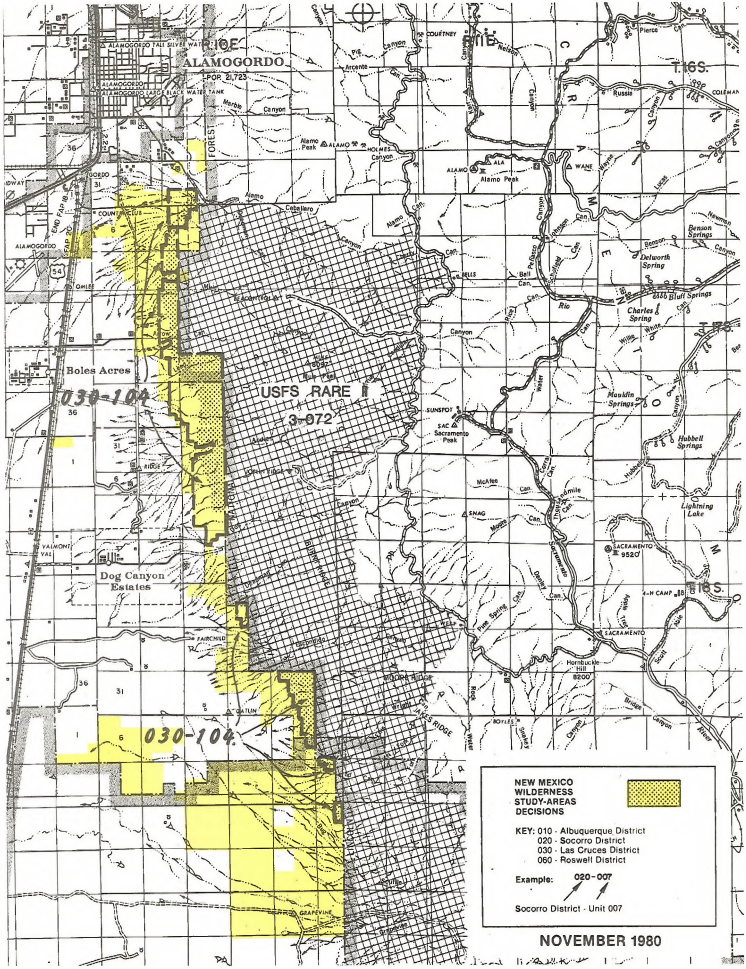
Final WSA Decision

The Bureau received numerous comments supporting further wilderness study of the Escarpment. Reasons for the support included the wilderness values of contiguous Forest Service land, naturalness, and opportunities for solitude and recreation. Both units were listed in the New Mexico Conservationist and the Las Cruces Conservationist Wilderness Study Area Proposals.

Comments suggested that the western boundary should be located along the base of the escarpment along a legal boundary instead of a topographic line. The Bureau changed both units' boundaries in response to these comments.

Two comments opposing WSA status for Bug Scuffle Canyon were received by the Bureau. Reasons for this opposition included the area's small size, lack of solitude, and the difficulty of managing the unit. Since the area will be studied with Forest Service lands, the area meets both the size and solitude requirements. The manageability of the entire area will be addressed during the wilderness study.

Both areas will receive further wilderness study with t _ Forest Service area West Face of the Sacramento Mountains. The recommended portions of both units will be combined and called the Sacramento Escarpment (NM-030-104).


ALAMOGORDO
POP. 21,723
Boles Acres
030-104
USFS RARE II
3-072
030-104
Dog Canyon
Estates
T.16S.
T.17S.
NEW MEXICO
WILDERNESS
STUDY-AREAS
DECISIONS
KEY: 010 - Albuquerque District
020 - Socorro District
030 - Las Cruces District
060 - Roswell District
Example: 020-007
Socorro District - Unit 007
NOVEMBER 1980

Brokeoff Mountains	NM-030-112	Unit Acreage:	58,200
		WSA Acreage:	28,600

Unit Description

Located 35 miles SW of Carlsbad, NM, this unit contains the Brokeoff Mountains and gently sloping to flat westward radiating alluvial fans. The topography is characterized by numerous rugged, rocky, and steep canyons. Vegetation consists of desert shrub, cacti, and grasses with sparse pinyon-juniper at higher elevations.

Wilderness Characteristics

SIZE: Boundary adjustments during intensive inventory divided the Brokeoff Mountains into 3 roadless areas (North, South, and East) greater than 5,000 acres. Two of these areas were proposed WSA's: North Brokeoff Mountains (030-112A, 13,780 acres of public land, 640 acres of state inholdings) and South Brokeoff Mountains (030-112B, 9,720 acres of public land). Analysis of public comments resulted in another boundary adjustment which reconnected the North and South units. The area is now one WSA with a size of 28,600 acres of public land and 680 acres of state inholdings. The southern edge of the WSA is contiguous to a designated National Park Service Wilderness in the Guadalupe Mountains National Park.

NATURALNESS: The WSA appears natural. Imprints within the unit include 1 good dirt tank, several abandoned dirt tanks, and jeep trails. The cumulative impacts of these developments are not substantially noticeable in the WSA.

OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES: The WSA contains outstanding opportunities for solitude and primitive recreation. The numerous rugged canyons in the area are far removed from the sights and sound of man. Outstanding hiking, rock climbing, photography, and sightseeing opportunities are available.

Final WSA Decision

Numerous comments were received supporting WSA status for the Brokeoff Mountains. These comments supported a variety of WSA acreages from the original Bureau proposal for two WSA's of 13,780 acres and 9,720 acres up to 40,000 acres. Since there were no maps attached to these comments the Bureau could not identify the areas being supported for WSA status.

Several comments disagreed with the Bureau's proposed WSA boundaries. Some comments said the route in Humphreys Canyon which divided the unit into two WSA's was not a road. Other comments recommended extending the western boundary to include the gently sloping alluvial fan.

The Bureau reexamined the route in Humphreys Canyon. The route was originally improved but has not been maintained all the way to Snow Tank in T. 26 S., R. 19 E., Section 11. After contacting the individuals who use this route and a field check the Bureau determined that the route is only maintained for approximately three tenths of a mile past the well in Section 28. The route becomes a jeep trail when it enters the arroyo.

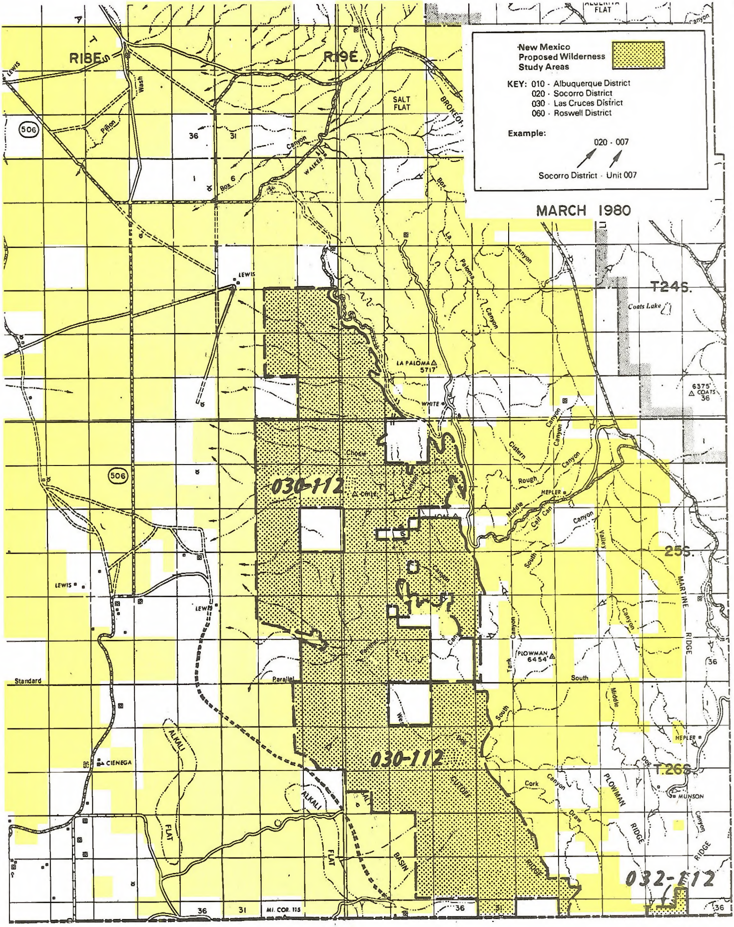
As a result of this route no longer being called a road the two proposed WSA's (North and South) are now reconnected into one unit, Brokeoff Mountains NM-030-112.

The western boundary was rechecked and the Bureau agrees that the proposed boundary eliminated portions of the western edge of the unit with wilderness characteristics. This was particularly true south of Humphreys Canyon and at the mouth of other canyons. The western boundary was redrawn to include these lands.

Several comments were received in opposition to WSA status for the Brokeoff Mountains. General reasons for opposing WSA status included exploration activity, minerals potential, and current livestock use. One comment said that wilderness designation would rule out states' rights on state sections. These issues have no bearing on the WSA decision and were not considered at this time.

Specific comments said that the Bureau had failed to identify the roads to Wildcat, Lewis, and Bar Tanks, and five roads leading to water tanks and troughs in the NW section of the unit. The roads to Wildcat, Lewis, and Bar tanks were identified as roads in the intensive inventory report, but were excluded from the published maps in the March 1980, "New Mexico WSA Proposals". These roads are identified on the final WSA maps. The five roads leading to tanks and troughs in the NW portion of the unit were called jeep trails during intensive inventory. After consideration of the information submitted by the public and another field check these routes were judged to be roads. These roads are indicated on the final WSA maps.

The Brokeoff Mountains (NM-030-112) is a WSA with an acreage of 28,600.


New Mexico
Proposed Wilderness
Study Areas
KEY: 010 - Albuquerque District
020 - Socorro District
030 - Las Cruces District
060 - Roswell District
Example:
020 - 007
Socorro District - Unit 007
MARCH 1980
R18E.
R19E.
T24S.
25S.
T.26S.
030-112
030-112
032-112
SALT FLAT
ALBERTA FLAT
LA PALOMA 5717'
6375' COATS
PLOWMAN 6454'
Coats Lake
LEWIS
WHITE
HEPLER
MUNSON
CIENEGA
Standard
Parallel
ALKALI
FLAT
BASIN
CUTOFF
RIDGE
MARTINE RIDGE
PLOWMAN RIDGE
MI. COR. 115
506

Little Dog Canyon	NM-030-114	Unit Acreage:	16,455
Pup Canyon	NM-030-115	Unit Acreage:	3,040
Rim	NM-030-124	Unit Acreage:	6,050
		WSA Acreage:	7,053

Unit Description

These areas are located 25 air miles southeast of Pinon, NM and 20 air miles north of the New Mexico/Texas border. All of these areas are contiguous with the United States Forest Service RARE II area #3-074, Little Dog and Pup Canyons, which has been identified as having wilderness characteristics and designated for further planning.

The areas consist of sections of the Guadalupe Escarpment, foothills and gently sloping alluvial fan. Vegetation is generally sparse and consists of grass and creosote associations in the lower elevations and cacti-grass associations in the upper elevations.

Wilderness Characteristics

SIZE: Boundary adjustments made during intensive inventory resulted in the deletion of 14,360 acres from Little Dog Canyon's original 16,455 acres, 2,040 acres from Pup Canyon's original 3,040 acres, and 2,092 acres from Rim's original 6,050 acres. These adjustments were made to exclude portions of the units lacking wilderness characteristics. When considered with the contiguous RARE II area #3-074 these units meet the minimum 5,000 acres size requirement. The final WSA boundary contains 7,053 acres of public land with no state or private inholdings.

NATURALNESS: The acreage recommended for further study appears to be natural. Boundary adjustments made during intensive inventory have excluded numerous roads, tanks, pipelines, and other range developments. Only a few faint jeep trails and fences remain within the unit's boundaries.

OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES: When considered with RARE II area #3-074, outstanding opportunities for solitude and primitve recreation are available.

SUPPLEMENTAL VALUES: Desert bighorn sheep have been seen along the Guadalupe Escarpment.

Final WSA Decision

Numerous comments supported WSA status for these areas. Supportive reasons included size, naturalness and opportunities for solitude and recreation. The primary supportive reason for further wilderness study was the contiguous Forest Service RARE II area.

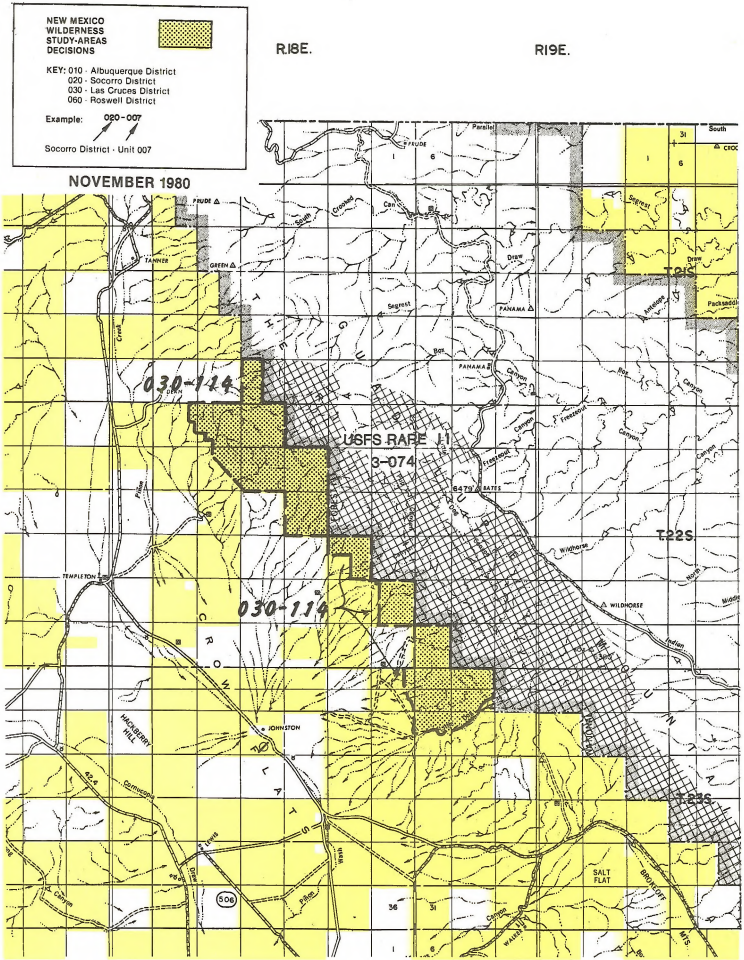
These areas were also supported for WSA status in the New Mexico Conservationist Wilderness Study Area Proposal and the Las Cruces District Conservationist Proposal.

Several comments were received opposing WSA status of the areas. One comment said that the Bureau's proposed boundary included tracts of land that were not a topographic part of the Guadalupe Escarpment and that these tracts should be dropped from further wilderness study. After evaluating this comment and field checking the areas in question the Bureau changed the proposed boundary to exclude several sections of land which were not a topographic part of the Escarpment. These sections are either in the flat alluvial fans or foothills of the escarpment.

Other comments said that the areas were not outstanding and the contiguous RARE II area would be dropped by Congress. The Bureau lands are not required to be outstanding on their own. When considered along with the RARE II areas the BLM portions of the escarpment have outstanding opportunities for solitude and recreation.

Others opposed WSA status because of the existence of barbary sheep and the potential for resource conflicts with livestock grazing. These issues have no bearing on the WSA decision and were not considered at this time.

The areas will receive further wilderness study along with the RARE II area #3-074. Acreage for these three units will be combined to form one unit called, Guadalupe Escarpment (NM-030-114).


NEW MEXICO
WILDERNESS
STUDY-AREAS
DECISIONS
KEY: 010 - Albuquerque District
020 - Socorro District
030 - Las Cruces District
060 - Roswell District
Example: 020-007
Socorro District - Unit 007
NOVEMBER 1980
R.18E.
R19E.
T.21S.
T.22S.
T.23S.
030-114
030-114
USFS RARE II
3-074
PRUDE
TANNER
GREEN
PANAMA
BATES
WILDHORSE
TEMPLETON
JOHNSTON
HACKBERRY HILL
SALT FLAT
BROKLOFF MTS.
Parallel
South
Drew
Segrest
Box
Canyon
Freezeout
Wildhorse
Indian
Cornucopia
Lewis
Pillow
Walker
506
42.4
36
31
6
1

Unit Description

This unit lies 67 air miles SE of Alamogordo, NM in the Cornudas Mountains. The New Mexico/Texas border forms the southern boundary. The major physiographic features of the unit are a portion of Wind Mountain and the northern edge of Chattfield Mountain. Vegetation is predominantly cacti/grass associations with creosote to the NE and east.

Wilderness Characteristics

SIZE: Wind Mountain contains 6,045 acres of public land. There are no state or private inholdings.

NATURALNESS: The unit does not appear to be natural. The unit contains a 2-track jeep trail in the SW part of the unit, a fenceline on the west side of Wind Mountain, and an abandoned dirt tank in the SE portion of the unit. A well and corral are located in the canyon between Wind Mountain and Chattfield Mountain. Due to the locations of these imprints, their cumulative impacts are substantially noticeable in the unit as a whole.

OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES: The unit lacks outstanding opportunities for solitude and primitive and unconfined recreation. The configuration of the unit (most of the north slope of Wind Mountain is outside of the unit) combined with limited topographic and vegetative screening restrict opportunities for solitude. Visitors would tend to concentrate between Wind and Chattfield Mts., and the sights and sounds of others would be unavoidable. The unit's small size and irregular shape also reduce opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation to less than outstanding.

SUPPLEMENTAL VALUES: There are no known supplemental values in the unit.

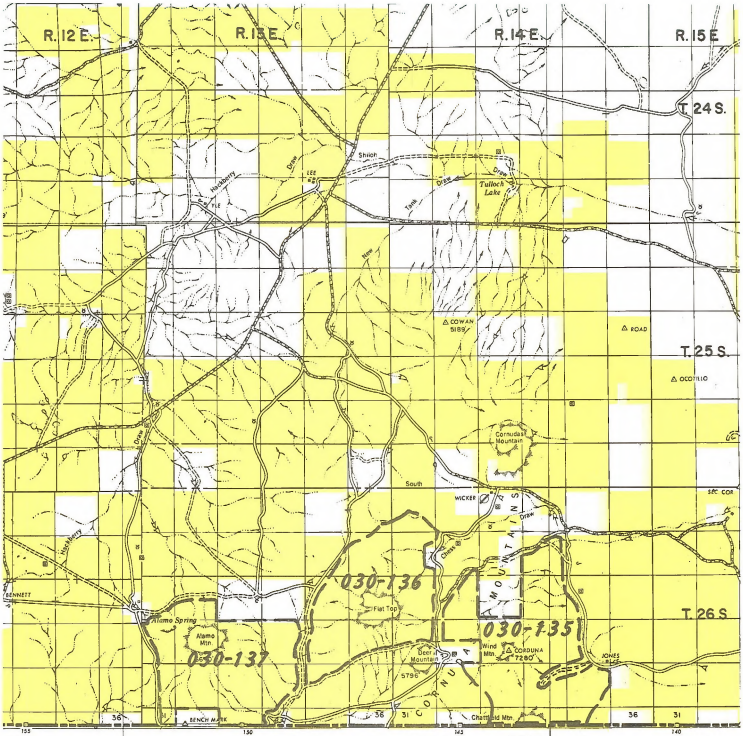
Final WSA Decision

During the public comment period the Bureau received one comment supporting WSA status for Wind Mountain. Supporting reasons included size, naturalness, and the opportunity for solitude and primitive recreation.

Two comments expressed opposition to WSA status for the area. The reasons for opposition included a lack of naturalness, solitude, or opportunities for recreation.

Four people said that more information was necessary before comments could be made and suggested the area be reinventoried. No specific inadequacies in the inventory were identified.

The Bureau recommended that Wind Mountain be dropped from further wilderness study because of a lack of naturalness and a lack of opportunities for solitude and recreation. Public comments both supported and opposed that recommendation. Mutually exclusive reasons were given in support of each position. Since comments did not present any new information on the wilderness characteristics of the area, Wind Mountain is dropped from further wilderness consideration.



.12 E. R.13 E. R.14 E.

T E X A S

NEW MEXICO
WILDERNESS
STUDY-AREAS
DECISIONS

KEY: 010 - Albuquerque District
020 - Socorro District
030 - Las Cruces District
060 - Roswell District

Example: 020 - 007

Socorro District - Unit 007

NOVEMBER 1980

Flat Top NM-030-136 Unit Acreage: 5,120

Unit Description

This unit is located 65 air miles SE of Alamogordo, NM, near the New Mexico/Texas border. The unit contains a mesa-like eroded intrusive igneous mountain and surrounding hills and flats. Vegetation consists of desert shrub, cacti, and shortgrasses.

Wilderness Characteristics

SIZE: The Flat Top intensive inventory unit contains 5,120 acres. There are no State or private inholdings.

NATURALNESS: This unit generally appears natural. The unit contains approximately 1 mile of jeep trail, a dirt tank, and 1.5 miles of powerline. The powerline is in trespass and therefore, for the purpose of wilderness inventory, was ignored. The cumulative impacts of these imprints are not substantially noticeable in the unit as a whole.

OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES: The unit lacks outstanding opportunities for solitude and primitive and unconfined recreation. Flat Top Mountain rises from slightly rolling terrain and covers less than 3 sections. It is possible to see most of the unit from the sides of the mountain. The small size of the unit coupled with the lack of topographic or vegetative screening reduce opportunities to avoid the sights and sounds of man. The portion of the unit that would be of interest to recreationists, Flat Top Mountain itself, is not large enough to offer outstanding opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation.

SUPPLEMENTAL VALUES: There are no known supplemental values within the unit.

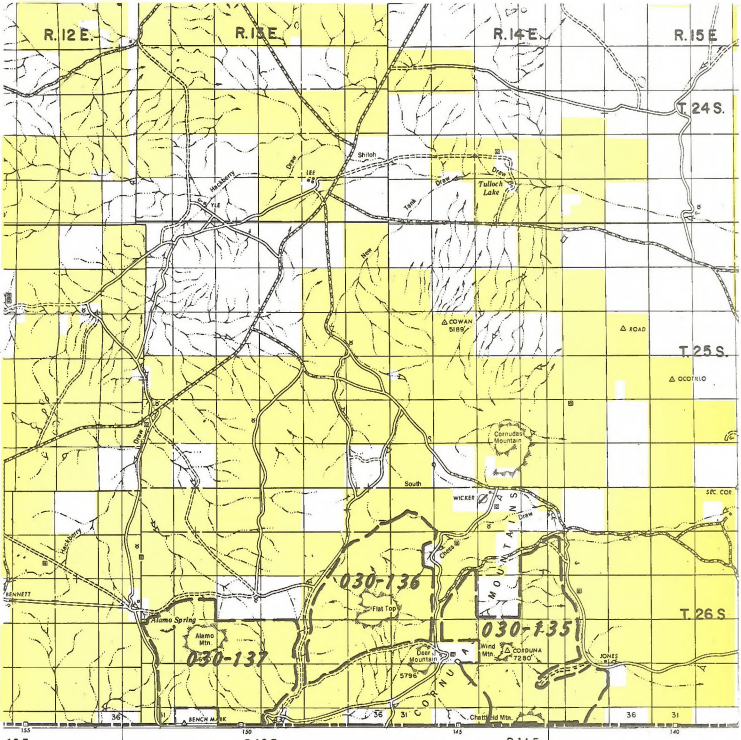
Final WSA Decision

During the public comment period the Bureau received one comment supporting WSA status for Flat Top. The comment concentrated on the location of range developments. Characteristics listed as adding to the unit's wilderness quality included naturalness, size, and the opportunity for solitude.

Two comments opposed WSA status for the unit. Reasons for opposition included small size, lack of vegetative screening or unique topography, and a lack of recreational opportunities.

Four comments said that more information was necessary before comments could be made and suggested the area be reinventoried. No specific information gap in the inventory was identified.

The Bureau recommended that Flat Top be dropped from further wilderness study because of a lack of outstanding opportunities for solitude or primitive and unconfined recreation. Public comments were received both supporting and opposing that recommendation. Mutually exclusive reasons were given in support of each position. Comments did not reveal any new information on the wilderness characteristics of Flat Top. Therefore, Flat Top is dropped from further wilderness study.



NEW MEXICO
WILDERNESS
STUDY-AREAS
DECISIONS

KEY: 010 - Albuquerque District
020 - Socorro District
030 - Las Cruces District
060 - Roswell District

Example: 020-007

Socorro District - Unit 007

NOVEMBER 1980

Alamo Mountain NM-030-137 Unit Acreage: 5,090

Unit Description

This unit lies approximately 65 air miles SSE of Alamogordo, NM in the Cornudas Mountains. The unit is bound on the south by the New Mexico/Texas border. Alamo Mountain dominates the unit (elevation 6670 feet). The NW and west boundaries lie along the base of the mountain. The eastern and southern portions of the unit consist of sloping to flat terrain. Vegetation consists of grass associations in the higher elevations and grass/cacti associations in the lower elevations.

Wilderness Characteristics

SIZE: A revised estimate shows that the Alamo Mountain unit contains 5,130 acres. There are no state or private inholdings.

NATURALNESS: The unit does not generally appear natural. The unit contains 2 dirt tanks, an abandoned building foundation (filled with trash), and a N-S fenceline through the western portion of the unit. The location of these imprints in combination with the unit's small size results in a cumulative impact on naturalness that is substantially noticeable in the unit as a whole.

OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES: The unit lacks outstanding opportunities for solitude and primitive and unconfined recreation. The unit's small size, topography, sparse vegetation, and configuration (the NE portion of the mountain is outside the unit) make it difficult to avoid the sights and sounds of others. The portions of Alamo Mountain within the unit do not offer opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation that are considered outstanding.

SUPPLEMENTAL VALUES: A part of the historical Butterfield Stage Station is located in the unit.

Final WSA Decision

Two comments opposed WSA status for Alamo Mountain. Reasons for dropping the area included a lack of naturalness, and a lack of opportunities for solitude or recreation. One comment said that the east and south portion of the unit were only included so that the area would meet the minimum 5000 acre size criterion.

Thirteen comments were received supporting WSA status for Alamo Mountain. The supporting comments spoke of the area's size, naturalness and outstanding opportunities for solitude and primitive forms of recreation. Specific information was received on the location of a small mine and tailings, range developments, building ruins, and cultural sites. Specific supportive statements spoke of "habitat types here that are nowhere under protection," "3 foundations composed of loose rocks...can easily be obliterated and the rocks scattered around", and "Alamo Mountain is volcanic...Vegetation is desert grassland, in a fairly large continuous tract, adding ecological to geological interest."

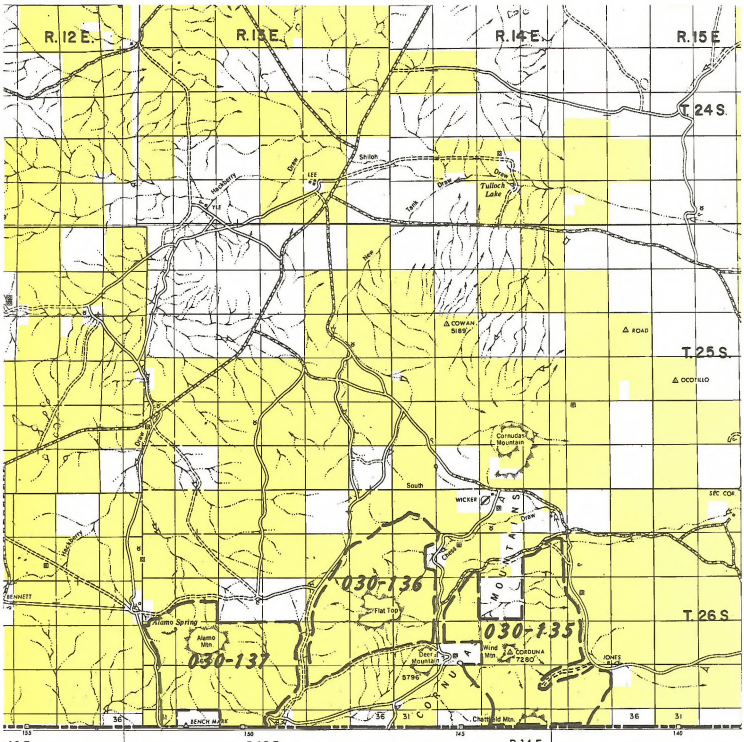
Alamo Mountain was also listed in the New Mexico Conservationist and the Las Cruces District Conservationist Wilderness Study Area Proposals.

The Bureau had recommended that Alamo Mountain be dropped from further wilderness study because the area lacked naturalness and opportunities for solitude or recreation. The comments supporting WSA status for Alamo Mountain agreed with the Bureau on the extent and location of human developments but disagreed on the impacts of these developments. One comment suggested that the rock ruins could be rehabilitated and thus the area would be more natural. These ruins are associated with the historic Butterfield Trail and are considered cultural supplemental values. The concrete ruin filled with trash could not be rehabilitated and this ruin remains as a negative impact on naturalness.

After careful consideration of public comment and inventory data the Bureau judges the area to be substantially impacted by the work of man.

The number, size, and distribution of the imprints of man's work were considered in the final naturalness determination of the area. Existing imprints are easily seen from most of the unit and reduce the primitive character of Alamo Mountain.

The Alamo Mountain inventory unit does not qualify for wilderness study.



NEW MEXICO
WILDERNESS
STUDY-AREAS
DECISIONS

KEY: 010 - Albuquerque District
020 - Socorro District
030 - Las Cruces District
060 - Roswell District

Example: 020 - 007

Socorro District - Unit 007

NOVEMBER 1980

Culp Canyon NM-030-152 Unit Acreage: 11,080
WSA Acreage: 10,937

Unit Description

This unit is located 22 air miles SSE of Alamogordo, NM in the northern part of the McGregor Military Reservation. The unit contains rolling to very steep limestone hills and the mountain foothills of the Sacramentos. Vegetation consists of grasses, desert shrub, yucca, and cacti, with some pinon-juniper in the NE portion of the unit.

Wilderness Characteristics

SIZE: The unit contains 11,080 acres of public land. There are no state or private inholdings. The recommended WSA contains 10,937 acres of public land and would exclude portions of the unit along the NW and southern boundaries where naturalness is locally impacted.

NATURALNESS: The unit as a whole generally appears natural. The recommended WSA contains an abandoned and revegetating dirt tank, fences, and 2 miles of jeep trail. The cumulative impacts of these imprints are not substantially noticeable in the unit as a whole. Boundary adjustments would exclude a raised aqueduct and 2-track jeep trail in the NW and 3 steel tanks and a dirt dam along the southern boundary.

OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES: The area contains outstanding opportunities for solitude and primitive and unconfined recreation. The unit is remote and rugged and offers good topographic screening for solitude. The unit's size, configuration, and topography create outstanding and challenging opportunities for hiking. Outstanding hunting opportunities are also available within the unit.

SUPPLEMENTAL VALUES: The unit contains prehistoric cultural sites that may be eligible for National Register status.

Final WSA Decision

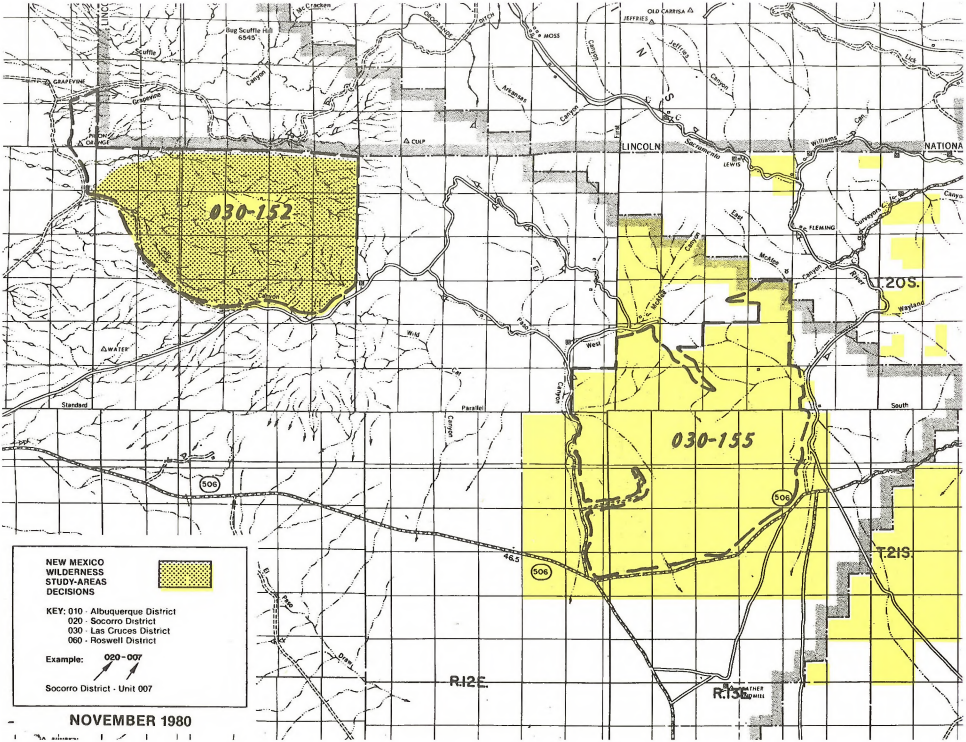
The Bureau recommended a WSA designation for Culp Canyon.

During the public comment period one comment opposed WSA designation for Culp Canyon because of existing military use. Potential use conflicts will be addressed during wilderness study.

Sixteen personal letters were received endorsing WSA status for Culp Canyon. Supportive reasons included size, naturalness, outstanding opportunities for solitude and primitive forms of recreation and supplemental values.

Culp Canyon was supported for WSA status in the New Mexico Conservationist Wilderness Study Area Proposal and the Las Cruces District Conservationist Proposal.

Since the information received during the public comment period reinforced the Bureau's original recommendation and no new information was received, Culp Canyon is a WSA.


030-152
030-155
T.20S.
T.21S.
R.12E.
R.13E.
LINCOLN
NATIONA
506
NEW MEXICO
WILDERNESS
STUDY-AREAS
DECISIONS
KEY: 010 - Albuquerque District
020 - Socorro District
030 - Las Cruces District
060 - Roswell District
Example: 020-007
Socorro District - Unit 007
NOVEMBER 1980

Cress Garden NM-030-155 Unit Acreage: 11,760

Unit Description

This unit is located in the NE corner of the McGregor Military Reservation. Topography is mostly flat in the southern part of the unit. The central portion of the unit is open and mesa-like, surrounded by more rolling topography. Vegetation consists of grasses, yucca, and cacti with scattered pinyon-juniper in the higher elevations.

Wilderness Characteristics

SIZE: Cress Garden boundary corrections in the southwest part of the unit increased the unit to 13,260 acres of public land. There are no state or private inholdings.

NATURALNESS: This unit does not generally appear natural. The unit contains 6 dirt tanks, 8 miles of jeep trails, 2 steel storage tanks, 2 drinking troughs, an earth dike, and a sizeable cleaned ditch. The cumulative impacts of these imprints are substantially noticeable in the unit as a whole.

OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES: Cress Garden lacks outstanding opportunities for solitude and primitive and unconfined recreation. Open areas in the southern and north-central parts of the unit lack topographic screening. Vegetative screening which would enhance solitude is sparse. Potential recreational opportunities (hiking, hunting, sightseeing) are typical of opportunities found throughout the district. The unit does not offer either an outstanding diversity in types of recreation or an outstanding quality in any one opportunity.

SUPPLEMENTAL VALUES: There are prehistoric cultural sites found throughout the unit. These sites may be eligible for national register status.

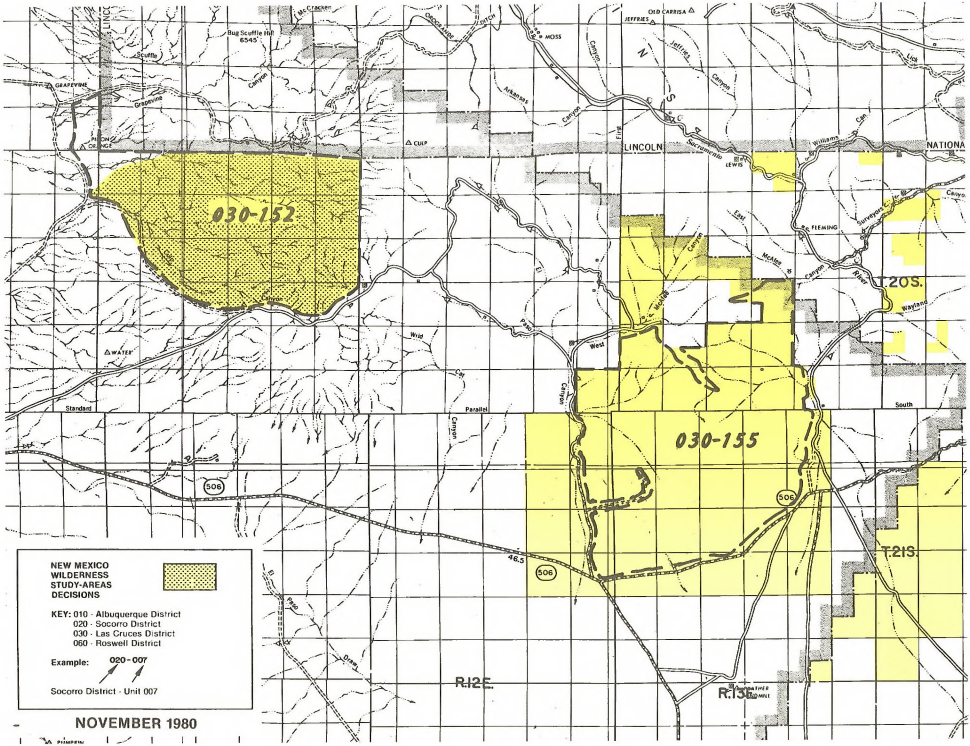
Final WSA Decision

During the public comment period the Bureau received two comments opposing WSA status for Cress Garden. Reasons for this position included a lack of naturalness, substantially noticeable imprints of man, and a lack of opportunities for solitude or recreation.

Five comments supported WSA status for Cress Garden. These comments addressed the size of the area, its naturalness, and the outstanding opportunities for primitive recreation and solitude. All of these supportive comments were lists of areas recommended for WSA status with no specific discussion of the wilderness characteristics of Cress Garden.

Cress Garden was also one of the areas listed in the New Mexico Conservationist Wilderness Study Area Proposal.

The Bureau has proposed dropping Cress Garden from further wilderness study. Comments received from the public contained no new information on the wilderness characteristics of the area. Therefore, Cress Garden is dropped from further wilderness study.



030-152
030-155
NEW MEXICO WILDERNESS STUDY-AREAS DECISIONS
KEY: 010 - Albuquerque District
020 - Socorro District
030 - Las Cruces District
060 - Roswell District
Example: 020-007
Socorro District - Unit 007
NOVEMBER 1980
LINCOLN
NATIONA
T.20S.
T.21S.
R.12E.
R.13E.
506
46.5
Bug Scuffle Hill 6545
Scuffle
GRAPEVINE
Grapevine
Canyon
CULP
WATER
Standard
Parallel
Wild
Cat
Paso
Draw
Arkansas
Canyon
Fine
Sacramento
LEWIS
Williams
Can
Surveyors
FLEMING
East
McAfee
Canyon
River
Wayland
West
McAfee
Canyon
South
Jeffries
Canyon
Jeffries
OLD CARRISA
JEFFRIES
MOSS
Lick
Cracker
Oconee Keyes
Lick

Texas Hill NM-030-810A Unit Acreage: 7,520
WSA Acreage: 0

Unit Description

Texas Hill Unit 810A is located approximately 39 miles due west of Carlsbad, New Mexico. This area is adjacent to the western boundary of Lincoln National Forest Guadalupe Ranger District. Topography of 810A is composed of rolling limestone hills cut by numerous drainages. Vegetation is that of the upper Chihuahuan desert.

Wilderness Characteristics

SIZE: The area originally contained 7,520 acres, but boundary adjustments made to exclude roads during the intensive inventory reduced its size to 7,340 acres. There are no private or state inholdings, but the unit nearly surrounds 80 acres of state land and 300 acres of private land.

NATURALNESS: Unit 810A considered by itself generally appears natural, but this naturalness is impacted and negated by road corridors and inholdings. Range developments in the unit consist of two vehicle trails and 6 ½ miles of barbed wire fences.

OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES: Texas Hill 810A provides an outstanding opportunity to find solitude in its many drainages and hillsides. This unit does provide some opportunity for primitive recreation activities, none of which could be considered outstanding due to the unit's size and especially its configuration.

SUPPLEMENTAL VALUES: This area contains several cultural sites.

Final WSA Decision

The majority of public comments for this unit were in favor of the WSA recommendation. Most of these favorable comments gave no supporting reasons.

Those opposed gave the following reasons:

1. Area's naturalness impacted by range improvements.

2. Conflicts with oil and gas exploration.

3. Limited recreation opportunities.

4. Naturalness impacted by man's imprint outside the unit.

5. Road corridors impacting unit naturalness.

These comments also went on to say that the roads leading to private inholding as well as those forming the unit boundary detracts from 810A's naturalness.

A reevaluation of the naturalness characteristics, based on public comment and the intensive inventory report, gives evidence that the wilderness quality of the unit is negated by the following impacts:

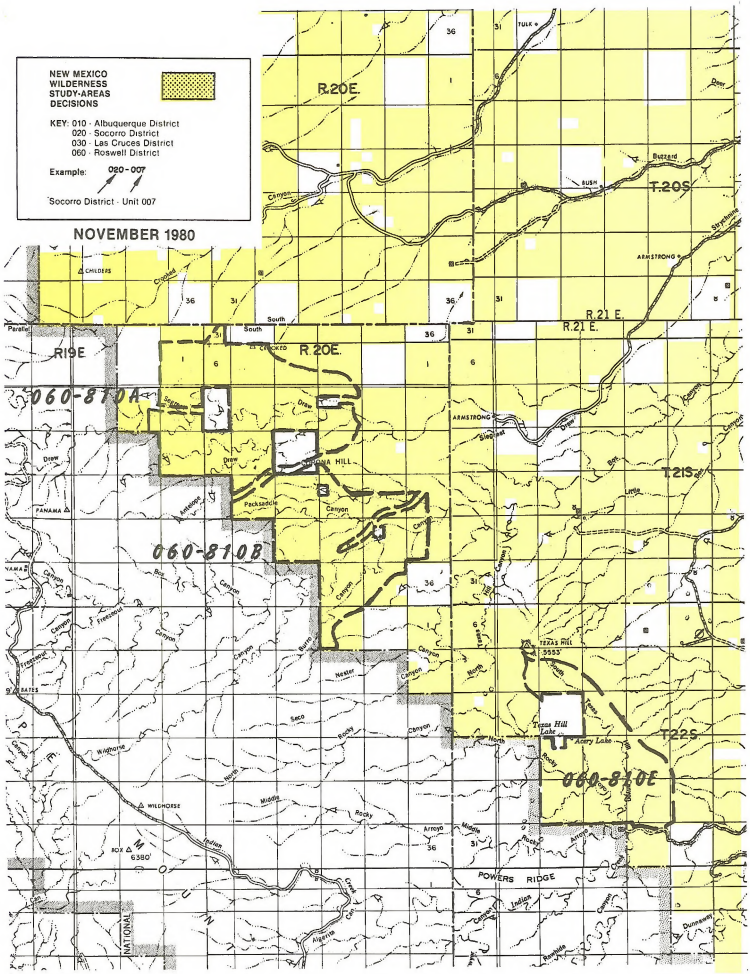
1. A transmission line crossing 1¼ miles of the northern half of the unit.

2. Road corridor leading to private inholding from the east boundary.

3. Road corridor leading to private inholding from west boundary.

It was found that these intrusions impact the essential wilderness characteristic of naturalness. The unit's size and configuration also amplifies the severity of these impacts.

Because this unit was found to lack the basic requirements of naturalness, it will not undergo wilderness study and will be dropped from further study.


NEW MEXICO
WILDERNESS
STUDY-AREAS
DECISIONS
KEY: 010 - Albuquerque District
020 - Socorro District
030 - Las Cruces District
060 - Roswell District
Example: 020-007
Socorro District - Unit 007
NOVEMBER 1980
060-810A
060-810B
060-810E
R.20E.
R.21 E.
R19E
T.20S.
T.21S.
T22S
CHILDERS
ARMSTRONG
PANAMA HILL
PANAMA
TEXAS HILL
5555'
Texas Hill Lake
Avery Lake
WILDHORSE
6380
POWERS RIDGE
NATIONAL

Unit Description

Texas Hill Unit 810B is located 38 miles due west of Carlsbad, New Mexico. This area is adjacent to the western boundary of Lincoln National Forest-Guadalupe Ranger District. Topography ranges from flat mesa-like hilltops to steeply rolling limestone hills cut by numerous canyons and arroyos.

Wilderness Characteristics

SIZE: Unit 810B originally contained 5,205 acres, but boundary adjustments and a more accurate calculation of its size during the intensive inventory increased this figure to 5,310 acres. In addition, the unit contains an inholding of 40 acres of privately owned land.

NATURALNESS: The imprints of man are substantially unnoticeable within this area. Imprints in the unit are related to ranching activities and consist of one corral, one dirt tank, two vehicle trails and 9½ miles of barbed wire fences.

OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES: The canyons and arroyos provide areas in which to find solitude in the unit, but a road which almost divides the unit hampers unconfined types of recreation.

SUPPLEMENTAL VALUES: The unit contains numerous cultural sites of archeological interest.

Final WSA Decision

The majority of public comments for this unit were in favor of the WSA recommendation. Comments were the same as for Unit 810A.

Most of the favorable comments gave no supporting reasons.

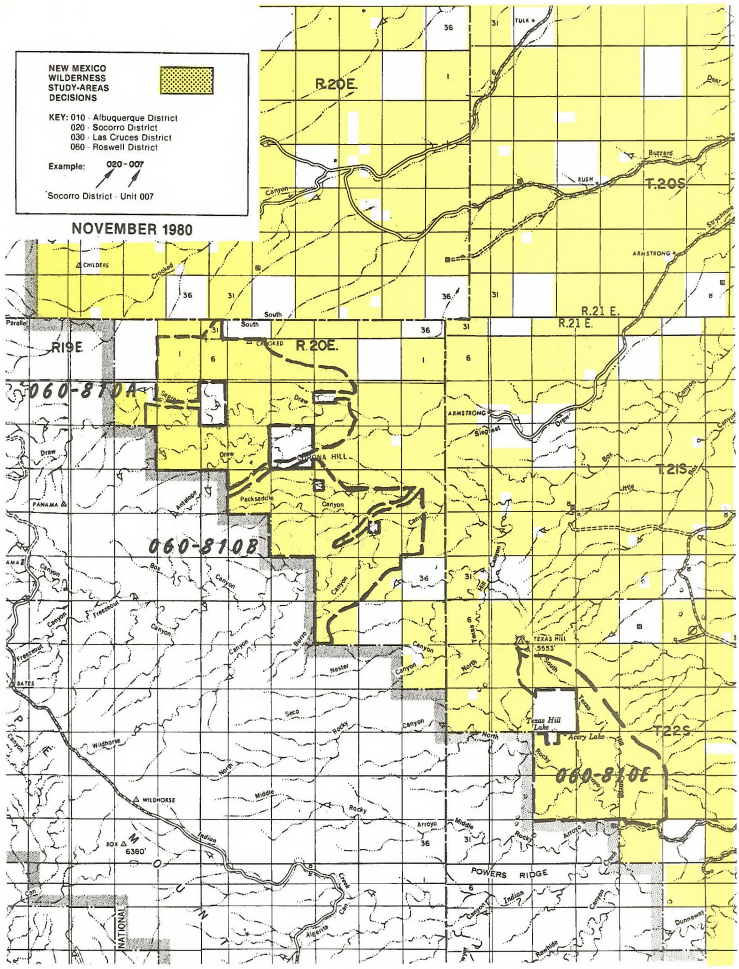
Those opposed gave the following reasons:

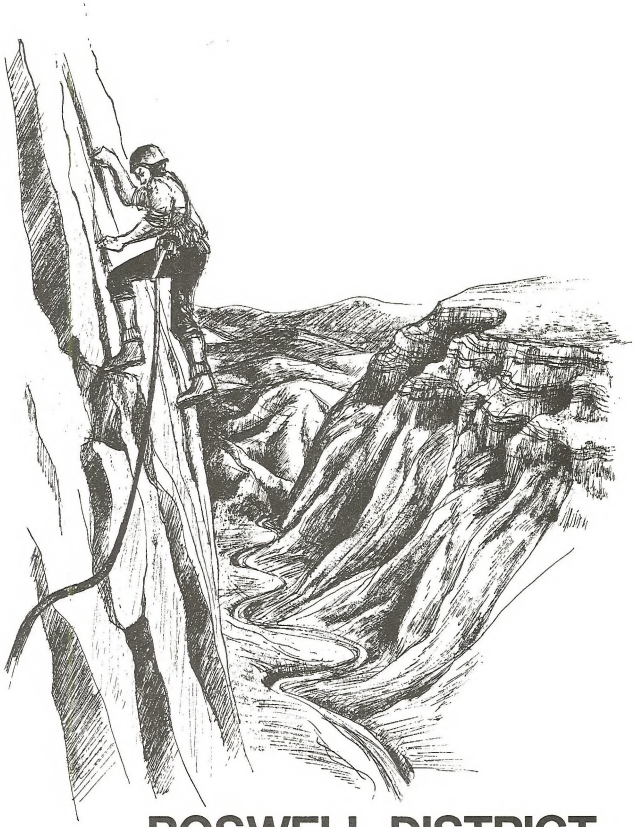
1. Area's naturalness impacted by range improvements.
2. Conflicts with oil and gas exploration.
3. Limited recreation opportunities.
4. Naturalness impacted by man's imprint outside the unit.
5. Road corridors intruding into unit.

As displayed on the adjoining map, a road nearly cuts this unit in half.

This road was mentioned in the public comments as an imprint of man, outside the unit which impacts the area's naturalness. Comments also stated that road corridors intruding into the unit impacted the area to a point where it should not become a WSA. Based on these comments, this unit was reevaluated.

It was found that due to the area's size and configuration, the road corridor severely detracts from the area's apparent naturalness and hampers unconfined types of recreation. Without the essential wilderness characteristic of naturalness this unit cannot be recommended for wilderness study. Therefore, the unit will not undergo study and will be dropped from the wilderness review.


NEW MEXICO
WILDERNESS
STUDY-AREAS
DECISIONS
KEY: 010 - Albuquerque District
020 - Socorro District
030 - Las Cruces District
060 - Roswell District
Example: 020 - 007
Socorro District - Unit 007
NOVEMBER 1980
R.20E.
T.20S.
R.21 E.
R19E
060-810A
060-810B
060-810E
T.21S.
T.22S.
CHILDERS
ARMSTRONG
PANAMA
BATES
WILDHORSE
TEXAS HILL
5553'
Texas Hill Lake
Avery Lake
POWERS RIDGE
NATIONAL



ROSWELL DISTRICT

James H. O'Connor, District Manager

Little Black Peak NM-060-109 Unit Acreage: 18,800
WSA Acreage: 15,570

Unit Description

Located 3 miles NW of Carrizozo, NM, this unit consists of the portion of the Carrizozo Lava Flow North of Highway 380. Little Black Peak marks the most prominent lava cone in the flow. Elongate pressure ridges, fissures, and circular depressions characterize the terrain. Vegetation consists of pinon-juniper, cacti, and grass associations.

Wilderness Characteristics

SIZE: Boundary adjustments to exclude 2 roads along the western edge of the lava flow reduced the size of the unit to 15,910 acres of public land. WSA boundary adjustments in the NE part of the unit would exclude 2 narrow fingers that extend beyond the lava flow and lack outstanding opportunities for solitude and primitive and unconfined recreation. The recommended WSA contains 15,570 acres of public land and 640 acres of state inholdings.

NATURALNESS: The unit is primarily natural. Imprints of man include 3 jeep trails along the NW, NE, and SE boundaries and 6 prospect trenches in Section 9, T. 7 S., R. 10 E. Their cumulative impacts are not substantially noticeable in the unit as a whole. Recommended WSA boundary adjustments would exclude the jeep trail in the NE part of the unit.

OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES: The unit contains outstanding opportunities for solitude and primitive and unconfined recreation. Rugged topography, limited access, and large size contribute to opportunities for solitude. Outstanding recreational opportunities include hiking, sightseeing, photography, and nature study.

SUPPLEMENTAL VALUES: The unit contains biological and geological supplemental values.

Final WSA Decision

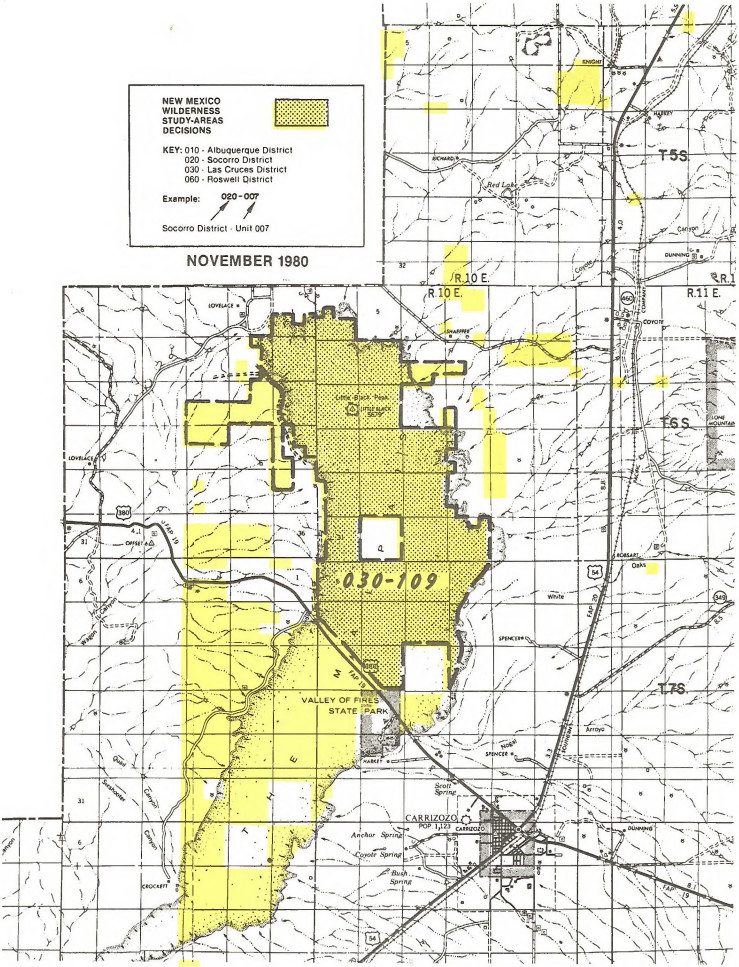
Numerous comments were received supporting WSA status for Little Black Peak. Supportive reasons included the area's size, naturalness, and outstanding opportunities for solitude and primitive and unconfined recreation.

Three comments were received opposing WSA status for the Lava Flow. Opposing reasons included the sounds of traffic on highway 380 and overhead jet planes and the unknown impact of WSA status on access to state land. These issues have no bearing on the WSA decision and were not considered.

One comment recommended a boundary change to remove roads in T. 7 S., R. 10 E., Sections 9 and 21, mineral prospect pits, and a finger of lava that did not offer opportunities for solitude. The comment also said that the Bureau had failed to show the above roads in the March 1980 WSA proposal.

After consideration of the comments, personal contacts with the local users, and field checks the Bureau has judged the route into section 9 to be a jeep trail. The road in Section 21 is outside both the unit and WSA boundaries. The mineral prospect pits are noticeable in the local area but the overall impact on naturalness is not significant. Therefore, the Bureau will not make the requested boundary change.

Little Black Peak is now a WSA.


NEW MEXICO
WILDERNESS
STUDY-AREAS
DECISIONS
KEY: 010 - Albuquerque District
020 - Socorro District
030 - Las Cruces District
060 - Roswell District
Example: 020-007
Socorro District - Unit 007
NOVEMBER 1980
030-109
VALLEY OF FIRES
STATE PARK
CARRIZOZO
POP. 1,123
T5S.
T6S.
T7S.
R.10 E.
R.11 E.
Red Lake
Anchor Spring
Coyote Spring
Bush Spring
Scott Spring
Dog Canyon
Arroyo
Oscura Mts.
Lone Mountain
Capitan
Carrizozo
Dunnigan
Coyote
Lovelace
Oscura
Spencer
Harbet
Brockett
Richard
Knight
Hervey
Grapevine
Oliver Black Peak
Corbin
Oaks
White
Sand
Sandstone
Canyon
Mesa
Draw
Creek
Ranch
Tank
Spring
Trail
Road
Highway
380
54
349

Carrizozo Lava Flow NM-060-110A Unit Acreage: 36,695
WSA Acreage: 11,000

Unit Description

This unit, located 4 miles west of Carrizozo, NM, consists of the Carrizozo Lava Flow south of Highway 380 and flat to rolling desert grasslands to the west and south. Vegetation consists of cacti/grass associations with some pinyon-juniper in the lava flow.

Wilderness Characteristics

SIZE: Two roads identified in intensive inventory divided the Carrizozo Lava Flow inventory unit into 3 roadless areas greater than 5,000 acres: Northeast (030-110A-1) 20,065 acres, Northwest (030-110A-2) 6,190 acres, and South (030-110A-3) 10,440 acres. There are 1,360 acres of state inholdings and 160 acres of private inholdings in area 030-110A-1. There are 40 acres of private inholdings in area 030-110A-3.

NATURALNESS: The South roadless area contains 7 miles of jeep trail, 3 dirt tanks, a powerline, and a telephone line. These imprints cumulatively impact the naturalness of this area.

The naturalness of the Northwest area is cumulatively impacted by 7 spreader dams, 4 dirt tanks, 8 miles of jeep trail, 4 tubs, 3 miles of pipeline, and a 30,000 gallon white storage tank conspicuously located on top of a hill.

The lava flow portion of the Northeast area appears natural and comprises the WSA. Imprints of man (2 miles of jeep trail) are negligible. Boundary adjustments would exclude an abandoned well, 2 dirt tanks, 5 spreader dams, 9 miles of jeep trail, and 2 mineral material sales sites from the WSA.

OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES: The rough topography and diverse vegetation of the lava flow enhance outstanding opportunities for solitude within the WSA. Outstanding opportunities for hiking, hunting, photography, and sightseeing are available within the recommended WSA.

SUPPLEMENTAL VALUES: The unit contains geological and biological supplemental values.

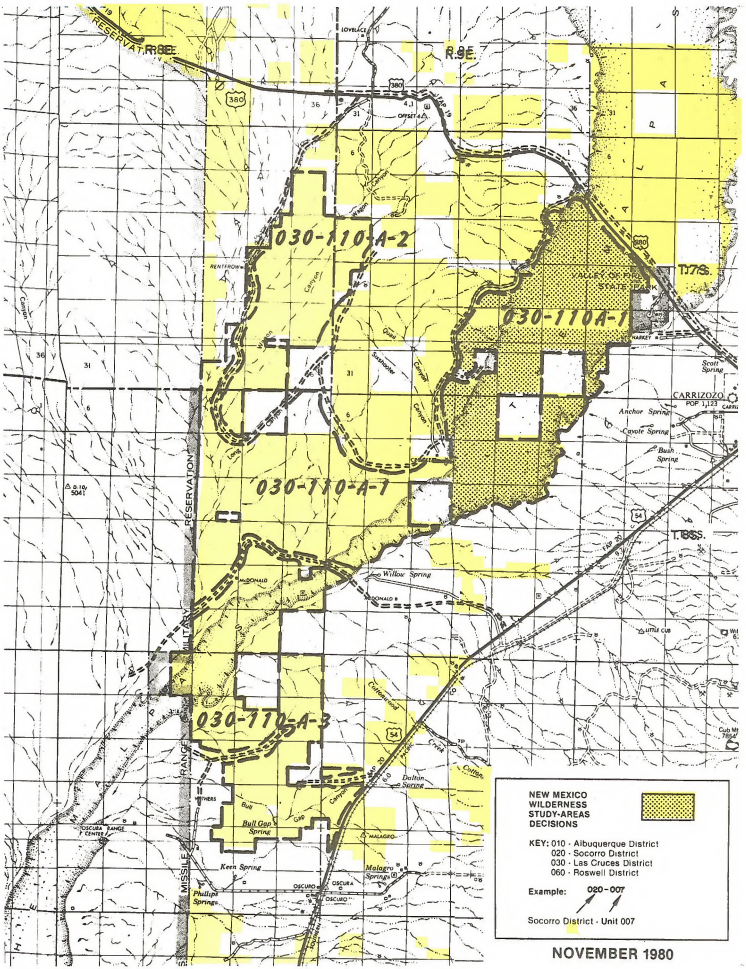
Final WSA Decision

Nineteen public comments were received supporting WSA designation of the Carrizozo Lava Flow. Most of the comments agreed with the BLM's proposal for an 11,000 acre WSA. Comments described the area as "truly unique and unusual". Supporting reasons cited the naturalness of the area and the outstanding opportunities due to the rugged topography and limited access. Outstanding recreation opportunities and the supplemental geological and biological values were also discussed. This area was also endorsed in the New Mexico Conservationist WSA Proposal and the Las Cruces District Conservationist Proposal.

Range impacts were given as reasons in the four comments opposing WSA status for the unit. One of these comments addressed the range impacts and lack of outstanding opportunities in the Northwest (NM-030-110A-2) and South (NM-030-110A-3) portions of the inventory unit. These two areas were recommended to be dropped from further wilderness consideration in the original BLM proposal based on the lack of wilderness characteristics.

Other comments stated that the impacts of nearby Highways 380 and 54 "defeat the purpose of wilderness" and detract from solitude. The effects of sights and sounds outside an area's boundaries on wilderness characteristics are considerations for the study phase of the wilderness review.

Since no new inventory information was received during the public review, the Northwest (NM-030-110A-2) and South (NM-030-110A-3) roadless areas in the Carrizozo Lava Flow inventory unit are dropped from further wilderness consideration. Eleven thousand acres in the Northeast (NM-030-110A-1) roadless area in the unit is now a WSA.



NOVEMBER 1980

Devil's Den Canyon NM-060-145 Unit Acreage: 320
Deferred
WSA Acreage: 320

Unit Description

Devil's Den Canyon is located 45 air miles southwest of Carlsbad, NM, adjacent to the southwest corner of Lincoln National Forest. The unit is contiguous to the U.S. Forest Service RARE II Area #3-077, Southern Guadalupe Mountains, which is recommended for wilderness designation by the U.S. Forest Service in the "Guadalupe Escarpment Wilderness Proposal".

The Devil's Den Canyon inventory unit consists primarily of the mouth and central portion of the canyon and surrounding cliffs. Devil's Den Canyon is rugged and narrow. Vertical relief is 750-1,000 feet. The surrounding cliffs are steep and characterized by a series of horizontally layered limestone bedrock.

Wilderness Characteristics

SIZE: When considered with the contiguous RARE II area, Southern Guadalupe Mountains, this area meets the size criterion of over 5000 acres.

NATURALNESS: Devil's Den Canyon appears natural.

OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES: When Devil's Den Canyon is considered in conjunction with the RARE II area, outstanding opportunities for solitude and primitive forms of recreation are present.

SUPPLEMENTAL VALUES: There are no known supplemental values within Devil's Den Canyon.

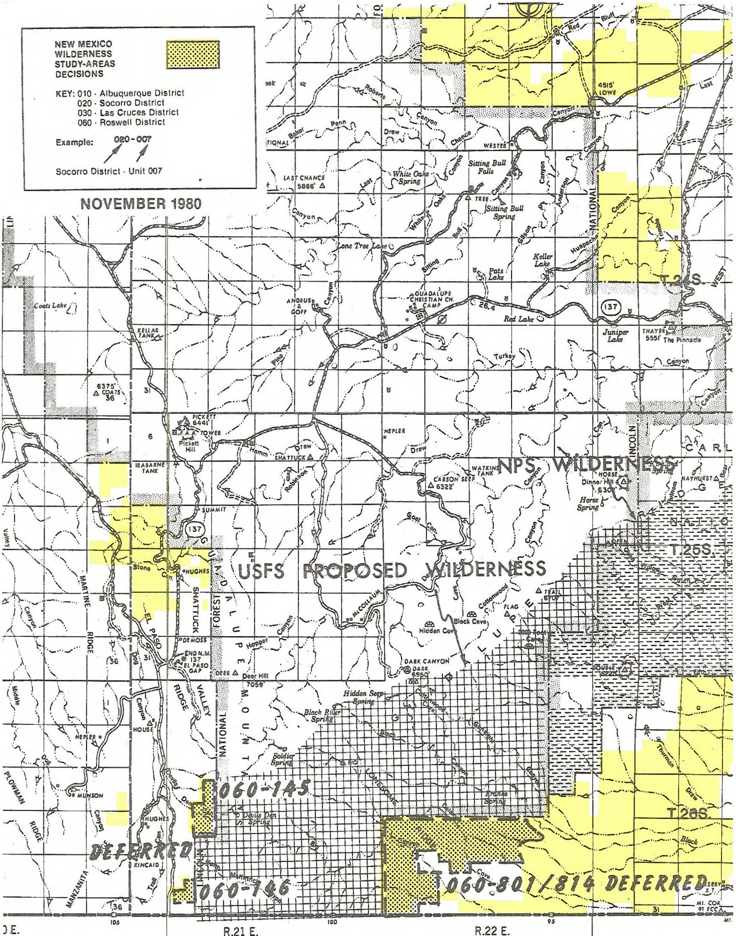
Final WSA Decision

Numerous comments were received supporting WSA status for Devil's Den Canyon. In addition to these comments both the New Mexico Conservationist Wilderness Study Area Proposal and the Las Cruces District Conservation Proposal endorsed WSA status for Devil's Den Canyon.

No comments opposed WSA status for the canyon.

The Bureau had stated in its original WSA proposal, "If Congress designates Guadalupe Escarpment as wilderness and if the three BLM tracts (Devil's Den Canyon, McKittrick Canyon, Lonesome Ridge) are adjacent to designated wilderness, they will become WSA's. This means they will be studied as possible additions to the Guadalupe Escarpment wilderness. If Congress rejects the U.S. Forest Service wilderness proposal, they will be dropped from further wilderness consideration since they would no longer meet the size requirements for wilderness study."

This original proposal is now final. The area will receive further wilderness study if the Southern Guadalupe Mountains are designated as wilderness.


NEW MEXICO
WILDERNESS
STUDY-AREAS
DECISIONS
KEY: 010 - Albuquerque District
020 - Socorro District
030 - Las Cruces District
060 - Roswell District
Example: 020-007
Socorro District - Unit 007
NOVEMBER 1980
NPS WILDERNESS
USFS PROPOSED WILDERNESS
060-145
060-146
DEFERRED
060-801/814 DEFERRED
T.24S.
T.25S.
T.26S.
R.21 E.
R.22 E.
GUADALUPE MOUNTAINS
LINCOLN NATIONAL FOREST
Sitting Bull Falls
Guadalupe Christian Ch. Camp
Red Lake
Juniper Lake
The Pinnacle
Pickett Hill
Dark Canyon
Deer Hill
Hidden Cave
Black Cave
Coats Lake
Lone Tree Lake
Keller Lake
Pats Lake
Martine Ridge
Plowman Ridge
Manzanita Ridge
El Paso Gap

McKittrick Canyon	NM-060-146	Unit Acreage: 200 Deferred WSA Acreage: 200

Unit Description

McKittrick Canyon is located 45 air miles southwest of Carlsbad, NM, adjacent to the southwest corner of the Lincoln National Forest. The unit is contiguous to the U.S. Forest Service RARE II area #3-077, Southern Guadalupe Mountains, which is recommended for wilderness designation by the U.S. Forest Service in the "Guadalupe Escarpment Wilderness Proposal".

The McKittrick Canyon inventory unit consists of a 3/4 mile portion of the West Guadalupe Rim. The unit forms the backside of North McKittrick Canyon which is in the Lincoln National Forest. The West Rim rises 1,400 feet above the bottom land and is characterized by a series of horizontally layered limestone bedrock. At the lower elevations, vegetation is primarily juniper woodland and grasses. Grasses and cacti become predominant as the elevation increases.

Wilderness Characteristics

SIZE: When considered with the contiguous RARE II area, Southern Guadalupe Mountains, this area meets the size criterion of over 5000 acres.

NATURALNESS: The unit appears to have been affected primarily by the forces of nature. There are no evidences of the impacts of man within the inventory unit boundary.

OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES: If McKittrick Canyon is considered alone there are no outstanding oportunities for solitude or recreation because of the area's small size. However, when McKittrick is considered in conjunction with the U.S. Forest Service RARE II area, outstanding opportunities are present.

SUPPLEMENTAL VALUES: There are no known supplemental values in McKittrick Canyon.

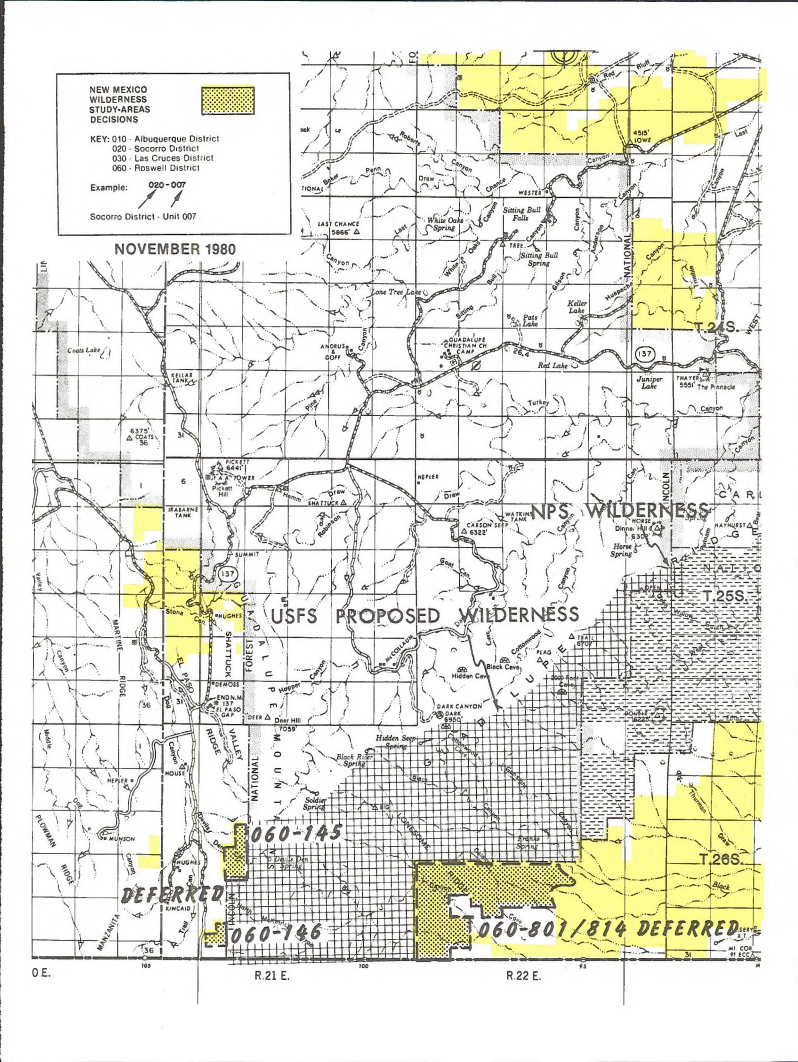
Final WSA Decision

Numerous comments were received supporting WSA status for McKittrick Canyon. In addition to these comments both the New Mexico Conservationist Wilderness Study Area Proposal and the Las Cruces District Conservationist Proposal endorsed WSA Status for the unit.

No comments were received opposing wilderness study of the area.

The Bureau had stated in its original WSA proposal, "If Congress designates Guadalupe Escarpment, as wilderness and if the three BLM tracts, McKittrick Canyon, Devil's Den and Lonesome Ridge, are adjacent to designated wilderness, they will become WSA's. This means they will be studied as possible additions to the Guadalupe Escarpment wilderness. If Congress rejects the U.S. Forest Service wilderness proposal, they will be dropped from further wilderness consideration since they would no longer meet the size requirements for wilderness study."

This original proposal is now final. The area will be studied for wilderness designation if the Southern Guadalupe Mountains is designated as wilderness.


NEW MEXICO
WILDERNESS
STUDY-AREAS
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060 - Roswell District
Example: 020 - 007
Socorro District - Unit 007
NOVEMBER 1980
NPS WILDERNESS
USFS PROPOSED WILDERNESS
060-145
DEFERRED
060-146
060-801/814 DEFERRED
T.24S.
T.25S.
T.26S.
R.20 E.
R.21 E.
R.22 E.

Mescalero Sands NM-060-501 Unit Acreage: 10,800

Unit Description

Mescalero Sands is located approximately 37 miles east of Roswell, New Mexico. The northern boundary of this unit is located 3 miles south of U. S. Highway 380. Unit 501 is composed primarily of low rolling sand dunes stabilized by a heavy cover of shinnery oak vegetation. A few large active sand dunes are located in the southern part of the unit.

Wilderness Characteristics

SIZE: Originally this unit contained 10,800 acres, however, boundary adjustments to exclude roads have reduced the unit to 10,575 acres. There is a state inholding of one section within Unit #501.

NATURALNESS: Mescalero Sands generally appears natural. Developments within the unit consist of 11 vehicle trails, one abandoned windmill with water tank, 2 wildlife waters and 17.6 miles of barbed wire fences. The cumulative impact of these developments does have some effect on the unit's naturalness.

OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES: The hummocky micro-relief of this unit provides natural screening and buffers visitors from one another and provides an outstanding opportunity for solitude. Mescalero Sands does not provide an outstanding opportunity for unconfined recreation due to its configuration and numerous intrusions.

SUPPLEMENTAL VALUES: This unit contains cultural, scientific and scenic values.

Final WSA Decision

Since the beginning of the BLM wilderness review, the determination of wilderness characteristics on Mescalero Sands has been very difficult. The actual "roadless" area is relatively small with very poor configuration. The area is almost cut in half by a road and non-BLM lands. Other roads protruding into the unit, with associated oil and gas and grazing impacts, adversely affect the area's naturalness. However, even with these impacts the area remains somewhat natural and very scenic in places. In addition, the active sand dunes and associated shinnery-oak ecosystem make the area very unique and highly signficant.

Originally, the BLM proposed to drop the area because it was "obviously unsuitable" for wilderness consideration. Many people disagreed with this recommendation so the BLM intensively inventoried the unit. Once again the wilderness characteristics determination was difficult, with heavy reliance on subjective judgements. The BLM eventually judged the unit met the minimum requirements needed to be considered in the next step of the wilderness review. However, due to the subjectivity of this decision, heavy emphasis was given to public involvement prior to a final decision.

An analysis of the public comments reveals that a strong concern exists about the unit's naturalness. Some of the comments stated:

> "The imprint of man, his work and his improvements, as permanent forces, are overwhelming."
>
> ". . . heavily impacted by grazing developments."
>
> "Visual intrusions abound."

These problems were also described in the intensive inventory report which states, in part:

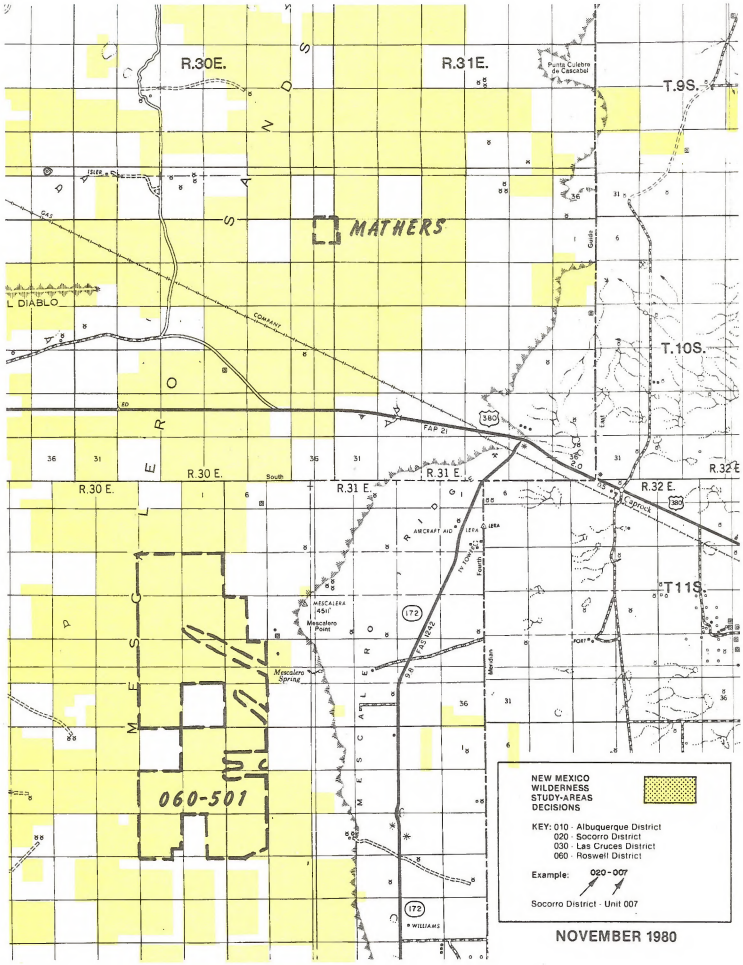
> "The unit does contain many range improvements which impair apparent naturalness . . ."
>
> "Fencelines are considered to be minimal impacts since they are presently acceptable in wilderness areas, but the cumulative impact of the network of fences does have an impact on this unit's naturalness."

The majority of comments endorsed wilderness study but did not address wilderness characteristics.

A re-evaluation of the naturalness characteristic, based on public comments and information contained in the inventory report, gives evidence that the wilderness quality of the unit is negated by ranching improvements.

After considerable study, discussion and consultation with numerous publics, the BLM now considers the unit's values fall short of wilderness quality. Therefore, the unit is dropped from further wilderness consideration since it lacks the essential wilderness characteristics of naturalness.

Mescalero Sands has long been recognized by the BLM as a special area in need of protection and careful management. Since 1972, 3,000 acres of land which includes the active dune areas, has been identified as needing special protective management. As a direct result of the wilderness inventories in the area, which revealed a great deal of new resource data and public concern, the BLM is proposing a designation and expansion of the protective management area to about 6,300 acres which includes the active sand dunes. This designation and active management will help protect natural values such as plants, animals, wildlife habitat, and cultural values, as well as the dunes and shinnery oak ecosystem. A large portion of the area, encompassing the largest dune, has already been fenced and is now closed to vehicle traffic and livestock grazing.


R.30E.
R.31E.
T.9S.
T.10S.
T11S.
R.30 E.
R.31 E.
R.32 E.
MATHERS
L DIABLO
Punta Culebra de Cascabel
Caprock
Mescalero Point
Mescalero Spring
MESCALERO RIDGE
060-501
NEW MEXICO WILDERNESS STUDY-AREAS DECISIONS
KEY: 010 - Albuquerque District
020 - Socorro District
030 - Las Cruces District
060 - Roswell District
Example: 020-007
Socorro District - Unit 007
NOVEMBER 1980

Texas Hill NM-060-810E Unit Acreage: 5,740

Unit Description

Texas Hill Unit 810E is located 34 miles due west of Carlsbad, New Mexico. Lincoln National Forest forms the southern and western borders of this area. The topography of 810E ranges from flat hilltops in its central core to steeply rolling limestone hills and cliff faces cut by deep drainages along its borders. Vegetation varies from the Chihuahuan desert plant community at lower elevations to pinon-juniper at higher elevations near the western unit boundary.

Wilderness Characteristics

SIZE: This unit originally contained 5,740 acres. During the intensive inventory additional road locations, new boundaries and a more precise acreage calculation reduced the size of this unit to 4,700 acres. The unit is smaller than the required 5,000 acres, and does not meet any of the size exceptions listed in the Wilderness Inventory Handbook.

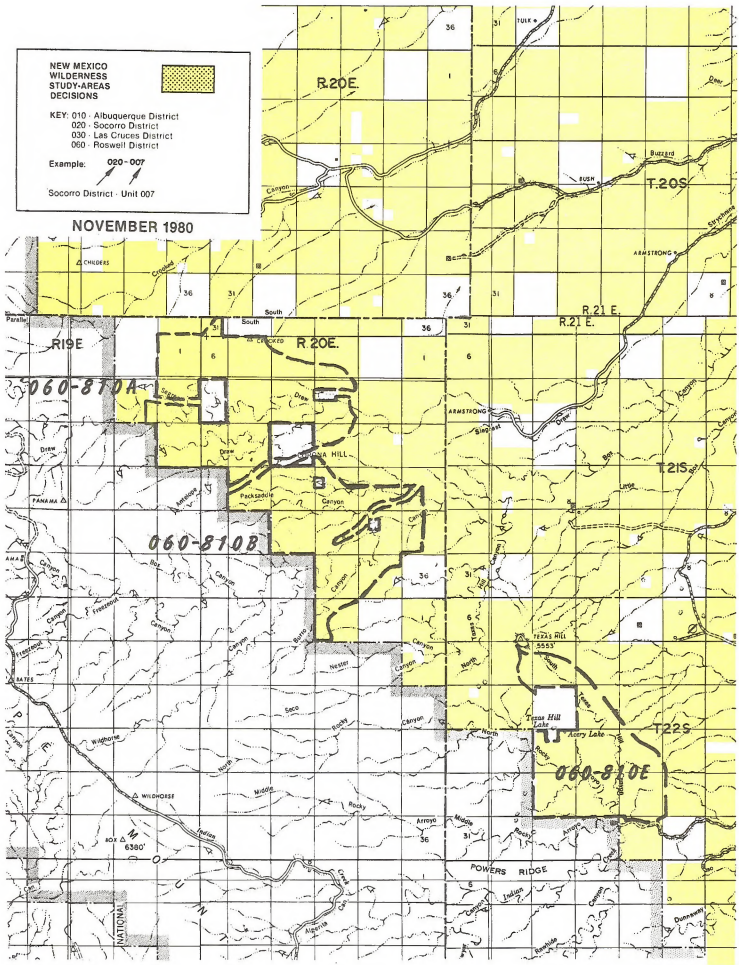
NATURALNESS: This area generally appears natural. but it contains range improvements which have a cumulative impact on naturalness. Range improvements consist of 2 vehicle trails, 1 steel water tank, 1 water tub for livestock and 5 miles of barbed wire fence with 2 more miles along the unit's eastern border.

OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES: There is only a minimal potential for an individual to have a primitive and unconfined recreational experience due to the unit's size. The low growing vegetation of the area does little to screen visitors from one another. However, the topographic characteristics presented by deep drainages and rolling hills does have a screening and buffering affect between visitors, which provides an outstanding opportunity for solitude.

SUPPLEMENTAL VALUES: This unit contains numerous cultural sites, caves and scenic vistas.

Final WSA Decision

Eight comments were received favoring wilderness study area status for this unit. None of the comments gave any reasons why it should be studied. Since this area is smaller than 5,000 acres and does not meet the basic requirement of size, it was not selected for the study phase of wilderness review.


NEW MEXICO
WILDERNESS
STUDY-AREAS
DECISIONS
KEY: 010 - Albuquerque District
020 - Socorro District
030 - Las Cruces District
060 - Roswell District
Example: 020 - 007
Socorro District - Unit 007
NOVEMBER 1980
R.20E.
T.20S
R.21 E.
R19E
060-810A
060-810B
060-810E
T.21S
T22S
TULK
BUSH
ARMSTRONG
CHILDERS
PANAMA
WILDHORSE
TEXAS HILL
5553'
Texas Hill Lake
Avery Lake
POWERS RIDGE
6380'
NATIONAL

Lonesome Ridge NM-060-801 Unit Acreage: 2,443
Deferred
WSA Acreage: 2,443

Unit Description

For the purpose of the intensive inventory and further reference, areas NM-060-801 and 814 have been combined and will be reported as one unit. Both area 801 (Lonesome Ridge) and 814 (Calamity Cove) share a common east-west boundary and are not separated by any manmade structures or geographic features. The two units are physically similar in nature.

Lonesome Ridge and Calamity Cove are located on the Texas border two air miles west of Carlsbad Caverns National Park. The northern boundary of this unit is contiguous with a RARE II proposed wilderness area in Lincoln National Forest. The most prominent features of this unit is the cliff face of the Guadalupe Escarpment which is an uplifted Permian age limestone reef. The topography of the area is very rugged, grading from the 1,700 foot escarpment, with its deep canyons, to the lower talus slopes and desert floor. Vegetation ranges from maple in the canyon bottoms to shrubs on the talus slopes, with trees on the ridge tops.

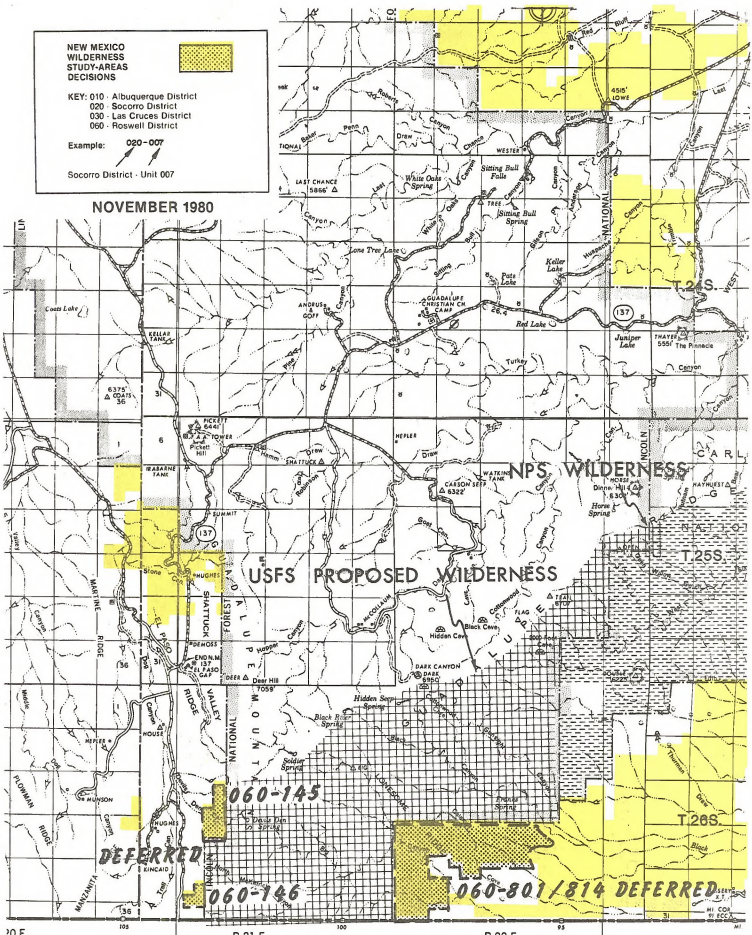
Wilderness Characteristics

Area 801/814 meets all the wilderness requirements except that of size. Although the area is less than 5,000 acres, it is contiguous with an area under consideration for wilderness preservation by the United States Forest Service (USFS). This area is known as the RARE II Unit 3-079 (Guadalupe Escarpment). This RARE II unit is recommended for wilderness designation and has been presented to Congress for action.

Final WSA Decision

Strong public support was received for wilderness study of this unit. Two comments opposed wilderness study, due to oil and gas exploration conflicts. These resource conflicts will be evaluated during the study phase.

The final decision on this unit will be deferred until Congress acts on the USFS proposal. If Congress designates the USFS lands as wilderness then area 801/814 will become a Wilderness Study Area (WSA). If Congress rejects the USFS proposal then area 801/814 will be dropped from the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Wilderness Review Program and wilderness review Interim Management Policies will no longer apply.


NEW MEXICO
WILDERNESS
STUDY-AREAS
DECISIONS
KEY: 010 - Albuquerque District
020 - Socorro District
030 - Las Cruces District
060 - Roswell District
Example: 020-007
Socorro District - Unit 007
NOVEMBER 1980
NPS WILDERNESS
USFS PROPOSED WILDERNESS
060-145
DEFERRED
060-146
060-801/814 DEFERRED
T.24S.
T.25S.
T.26S.
R.20 E.
R.21 E.
R.22 E.

Jurnigan NM-060-802 Unit Acreage: 4,800

Unit Description

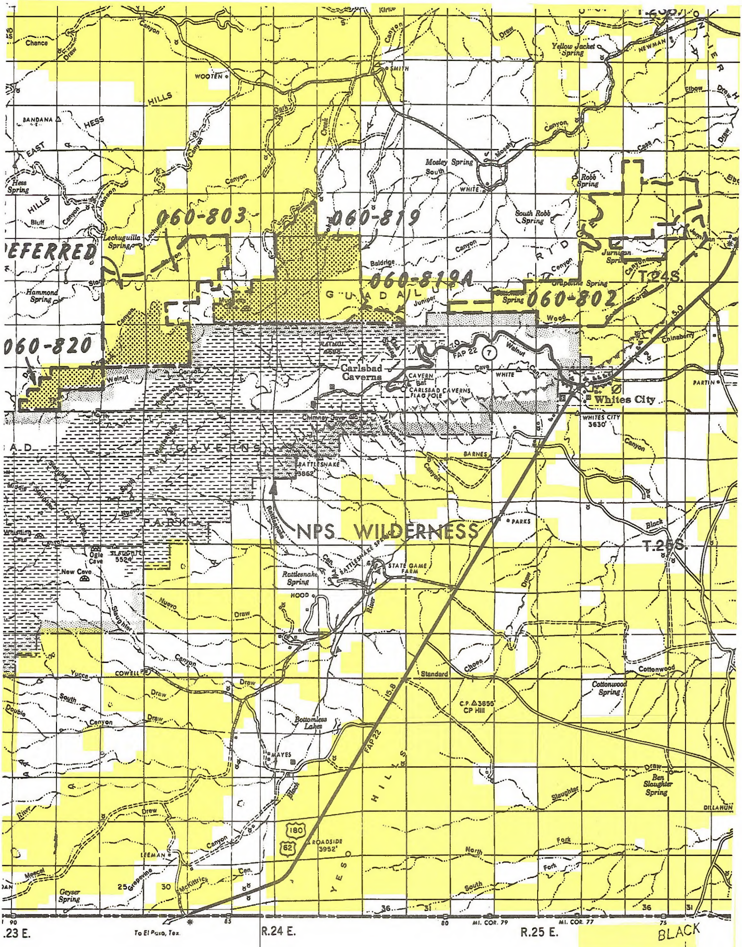
The Jurnigan Inventory Unit is located 1.3 miles north of White City, New Mexico, on the north boundary of Carlsbad Caverns National Park (CCNP). The area contains rolling limestone hills with vegetation of the Chihuahuan Desert plant community. There are no state or private lands within this unit.

This unit was selected for intensive inventory because it is contiguous with an area in CCNP being restudied for possible wilderness preservation. The National Park Service has been mandated by Congress to restudy nonwilderness portions of the Park for possible wilderness consideration.

The Jurnigan Unit (NM-060-802) does not meet the basic requirements for selection as a Wilderness Study Area. This is due to the unit's lack of the following wilderness characteristics: solitude; opportunity for primitive and unconfined types of recreation; and size. External imprints of man also affect the apparent naturalness and configuration of this unit and severely detract from wilderness qualities. Normally, the imprints of man outside of a roadless unit are not considered during wilderness inventory. However, due to this area's small size, configuration, and placement of non-federal lands, outside imprints could not be ignored while assessing wilderness characteristics.

Final WSA Decision

This unit did not receive any public comment. Since this unit does not meet the basic requirements for wilderness study it will be dropped from further review.



060-803
060-819
060-819A
060-802
060-820
DEFERRED
NPS WILDERNESS
Carlsbad Caverns
Whites City
WHITES CITY 3630'
CARLSBAD CAVERNS FLAG POLE
Chimney Cave
RATTLESNAKE 5862'
SLAUGHTER 5524'
Ogle Cave
New Cave
Whistling Cave
Rattlesnake Spring
RATTLESNAKE SPRINGS
STATE GAME FARM
HOOD
PARKS
BARNES
Bottomless Lakes
MAYES
COWELL
LEEMAN
McKittrick
Geyser Spring
Cottonwood Spring
Ben Slaughter Spring
C.P. △ 3855' CP Hill
ROADSIDE 3952'
Standard
Chinaberry
PARTIN
DILLAHUNT
Yellow Jacket Spring
NEWMAN
SMITH
WOOTEN
Chance
BANDANA
Hess Spring
Lechuguilla Spring
Hammond Spring
Mosley Spring
South Robb Spring
Robb Spring
Jurnigan Spring
Grapevine Spring
Baldrige
Juniper
Wood
FAP 22
180
62
T.24S.
T.25S.
R.23 E.
R.24 E.
R.25 E.
To El Paso, Tex.
MI. COR. 79
MI. COR. 77
BLACK

Lechuguilla Canyon	NM-060-803	Unit Acreage:	3,200
		Deferred	
		WSA Acreage:	1,167

Unit Description

Unit 803 (Lechuguilla Canyon) was selected for intensive inventory because it is contiguous with designated wilderness in Carlsbad Caverns National Park (CCNP). The area's south boundary is also adjacent to a portion of the park being restudied for possible wilderness designation. (The National Park Service has been mandated by Congress, in Public Law 93-625, Section 401(2), to restudy areas in CCNP for possible addition to the Wilderness Preservation System these areas consist of all lands not presently designated as wilderness in the Park).

The most predominant topographic feature in the unit is Dark Canyon, which is one of the major drainages of the Guadalupe Mountains. The northern part of 803 starts at the bottom of Dark Canyon and extends south to the CCNP boundary.

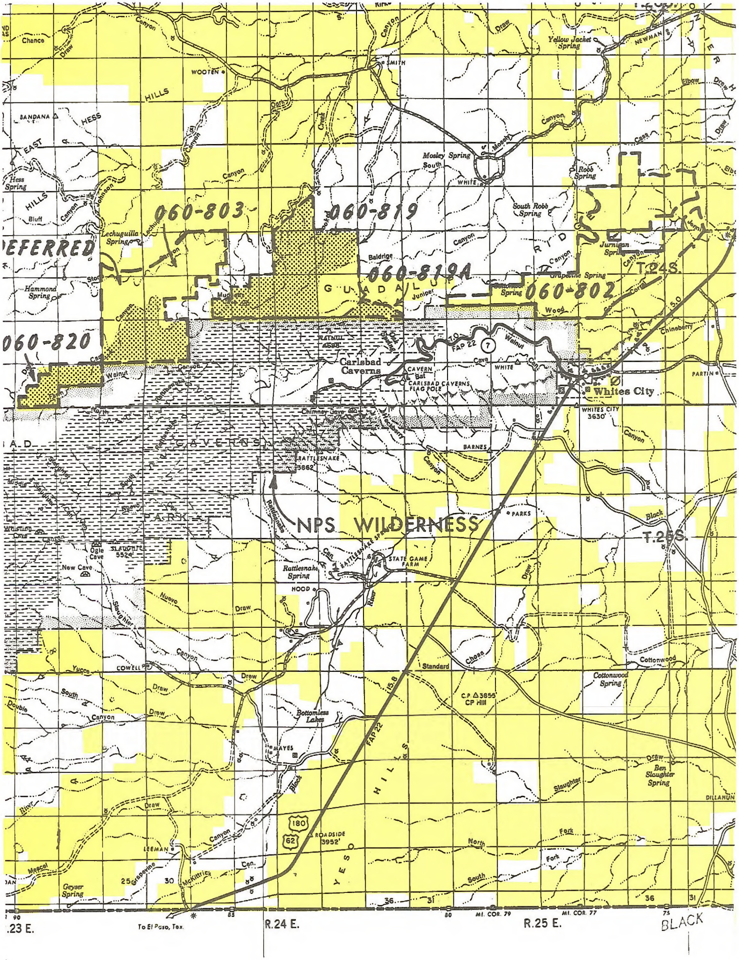
Because of the rugged topography in this unit, it has not been substantially impacted by man's activities. Vegetation within the area ranges from the typical Chihuahuan Desert plant communities on the limestone hills to larger desert shrubs and trees in the bottom of Dark Canyon.

During the intensive inventory, a road was found which bisects this unit from east to west. This road divided the unit into two areas which contained 1,167 acres in the south and 2,033 acres in the northern part. Only the southern part of this unit was found to contain the necessary requirements for designation as a Wilderness Study Area.

Unit 803 is poorly aligned with existing wilderness in CCNP, since it is only contiguous near the extreme southeast corner. A recommendation for this unit to enter the wilderness study phase is dependent on enlarging the existing wilderness in the CCNP so that the Unit 803 boundary would be better aligned and make practicable its preservation as potential wilderness.

Final WSA Decision

Several people commented on this unit with an equal number supporting or opposing the WSA recommendation. Those supporting the recommendation gave little reason for their support, while those opposed did address some wilderness characteristics. These comments were concerned with the impacts of sights and sounds outside the area on the unit's naturalness. A few comments also addressed the need for oil and gas which may be found in the unit. During this stage of the wilderness review, resource conflicts such as with oil and gas or outside sights and sounds, are not evaluated. This part of the evaluation will be done during the study phase. Since no pertinent information was received during the public comment period which would affect the proposed WSA recommendation, the final decision to consider lands with wilderness characteristics in Unit 803 will be deferred until the Park Service has completed their study. If their study does not recommend additional wilderness adjacent to Unit 803, this unit will be dropped from the wilderness review process. If contiguous Park lands are proposed for wilderness designation, then sufficient wilderness characteristics would be present to designate this unit as a Wilderness Study Area. Until the Park Service restudy is completed, this unit will be protected in accordance with the Bureau of Land Management's Interim Management Policies.


060-803
060-819
060-819A
060-802
060-820
DEFERRED
NPS WILDERNESS
T.24S.
T.25S.
Chance
Draw
Canyon
WOOTEN
SMITH
HILLS
BANDANA
HESS
EAST
Hess Spring
Bluff
Johnson
Lechuguilla Spring
Hammond Spring
Yellow Jacket Spring
NEWMAN
Mosley Spring
South
WHITE
Robb Spring
South Robb Spring
Jurnigan Spring
Baldrige
Grapevine Spring
Cottonwood Spring
G U A D A L U P
Juniper
Wood
RID
Walnut
FAP 22
Carlsbad Caverns
CAVERN
Bat
CARLSBAD CAVERNS FLAG POLE
Cave
Chinaberry
PARTIN
Whites City
WHITES CITY 3630'
Chimney Cave
BARNES
RATTLESNAKE 3862
C A V E R N S
P A R K
Slaughter
Middle
Nuevo
Whistling Cave
Ogle Cave
SLAUGHTER 5524
New Cave
Rattlesnake
PARKS
Black
RATTLESNAKE SPRING
STATE GAME FARM
Rattlesnake Spring
HOOD
River
Draw
Standard
Chosa
Cottonwood
Cottonwood Spring
C.P. Δ 3855
CP Hill
Yucca
COWELL
South
Double
Drew
Bottomless Lakes
MAYES
YESO HILLS
Ben Slaughter Spring
DILLAHUNTY
180
62
ROADSIDE 3952'
North
Fork
South
LEEMAN
McKittrick
Grapevine
Mescal
Geyser Spring
25
30
36
31
MI. COR. 79
MI. COR. 77
R.23 E.
R.24 E.
R.25 E.
To El Paso, Tex.
BLACK

Mudgetts NM-060-819/819A Unit Acreage: 3,733
WSA Acreage: 2,941

Unit Description

These areas are located on the northern border of Carlsbad Caverns National Park. They contain undulating limestone hills cut by five major drainages. The western end of the area contains a meander of the Serpentine Bends portion of Dark Canyon, a major drainage of the Guadalupe Mountains. The sheer limestone cliffs rise over 600 feet above the canyon to an altitude of 4,800 feet. The majority of the vegetation is typical of the Chihuahuan Desert plant community with mixed desert shrubs and trees in the bottom of Dark Canyon.

Wilderness Characteristics

The intensive inventory units originally contained 3,733 acres; 819A contained 213 acres and 819 contained 3,520 acres. A road was identified during the intensive inventory which isolated 792 acres of Unit 819 from existing CCNP wilderness. 2,728 acres of Unit 819 and all of 819A are still contiguous to existing wilderness. This leaves a total of 2,941 acres. Unit 819/819A is less than 5,000 acres in size, but still meets the Wilderness Inventory Handbook (Blue book) requirement, in that it is contiguous with an existing wilderness area. This existing wilderness is part of Carlsbad Caverns National Park (CCNP).

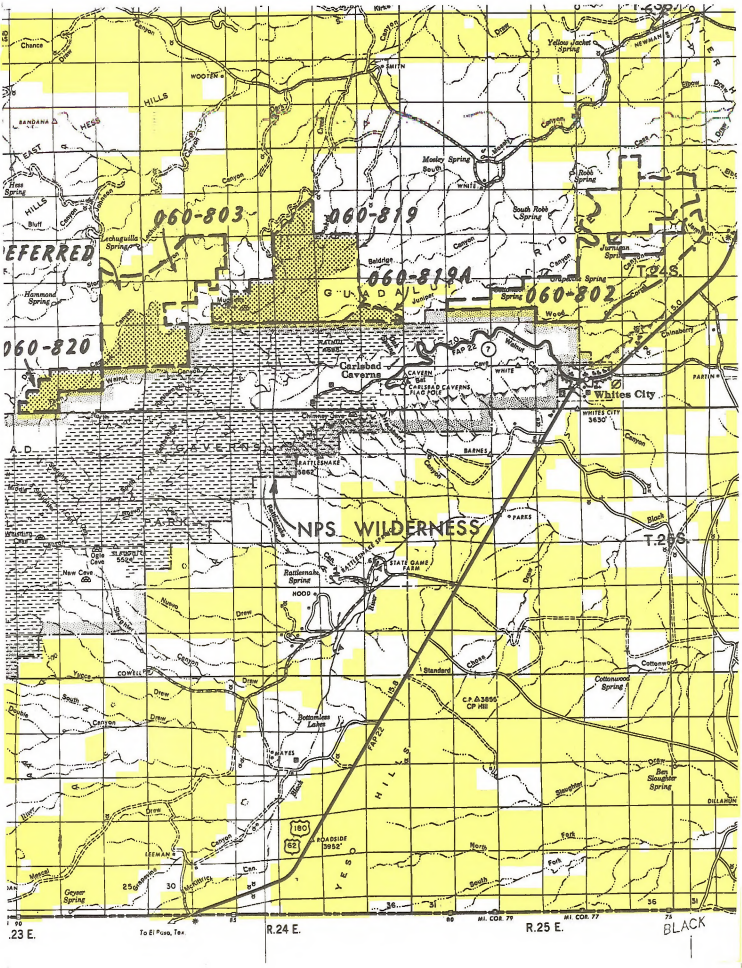
Mudgetts generally appears natural with a minimal impact of range improvements. Without considering CCNP wilderness lands, Mudgetts does not have sufficient size to provide an opportunity for outstanding solitude or unconfined recreation.

Cooperative Wilderness Studies

The identified portions of these units qualify for Wilderness Study. It is a logical topographic extension of designated wilderness. It is separated from Carlsbad Caverns National Park only by a fence line. The National Park Service and BLM will work together to determine if wilderness management of this unit compliments management of the designated CCNP wilderness area when adjacent BLM lands are considered.

Final WSA Decision

Public opinion on Mudgetts was mixed, with an equal number wanting it dropped from further study or kept in the wilderness review. Those opposed to wilderness study of this unit stated that sights and sounds from outside the area detracted from its natural character. Outside sights and sounds will not be evaluated until the wilderness study phase of the review. Since no new information was received pertinent to the present phase of wilderness review, there will be no change in the WSA recommendation, and this unit will receive wilderness study.



060-803
060-819
060-819A
060-802
060-820
EFERRED
NPS WILDERNESS
Carlsbad Caverns
Whites City
T.24S.
T.25S.
R.24 E.
R.25 E.
.23 E.
To El Paso, Tex.
BLACK

Fawn Valley NM-060-820 Unit Acreage: 700
Deferred
WSA Acreage: 700

Unit Description

This unit is located along the north boundary of Carlsbad Caverns National Park (CCNP). Fawn Valley's most predominant land features are the sheer, layered limestone cliffs and steep, rugged hillsides.

Vertical relief reaches 850 feet. Soils are very thin and rocky, and vegetation consists of numerous species of cactus, yucca and mixed desert shrubs or grasses of the Chihuahuan Desert, with scattered pinyons and junipers.

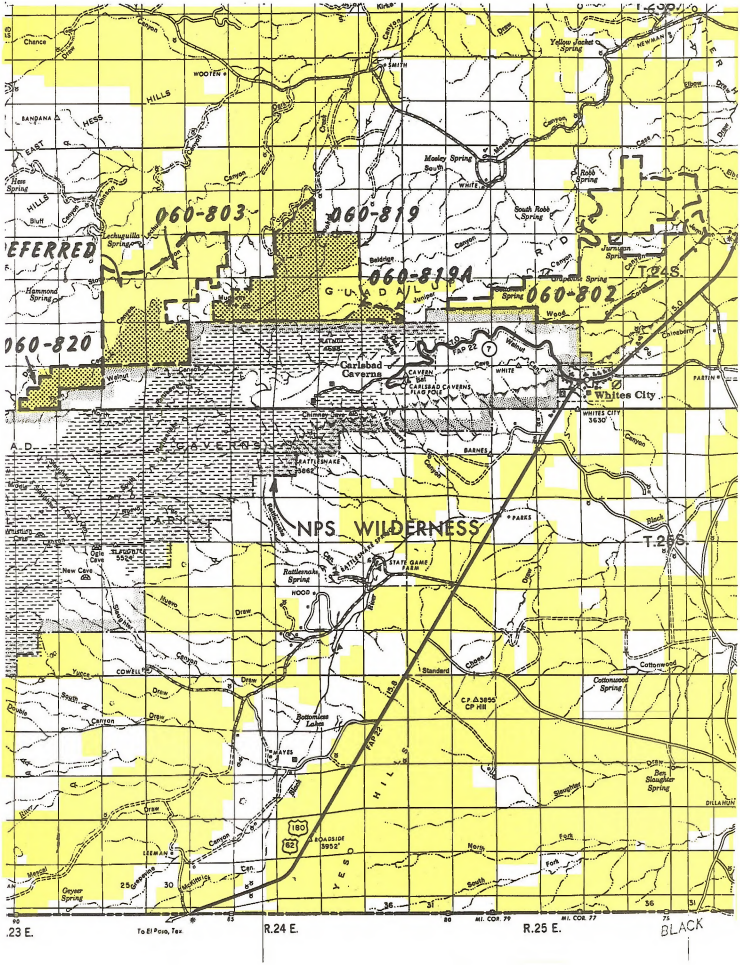
Fawn Valley is quite natural in appearance, but lacks opportunities for solitude and recreation due to its small size.

This unit, although less than 5,000 acres in size, was selected for intensive inventory because it is contiguous with an area in CCNP being restudied for possible wilderness preservation. The National Park Service has been mandated by Congress to restudy certain areas in the Park for possible wilderness consideration. These areas consist of all lands not currently designated as wilderness in the Park.

Final WSA Decision

Strong support was received during the public comment period for wilderness study of this unit. Sixteen comments favored the WSA recommendation and two were opposed. Those opposed stated that this unit may contain oil and gas resources needed to meet our nation's energy demands. Since resource conflicts are to be addressed in the study phase of the wilderness review, these two opposing comments are not presently pertinent. No information was received which would warrant dropping this unit, therefore, there will be no change in the inventory recommendation which becomes the final decision:

> "If the Park Service recommends wilderness designation for their lands which are contiguous with Unit 820, then this area will be evaluated as a Wilderness Study Area. However, if the Park Service does not make a positive wilderness recommendation for their contiguous lands, then this unit will not meet the size requirements of the Wilderness Inventory Handbook (Blue book) and will be dropped from the wilderness review process.
>
> Until the Park Service restudy is completed, this unit will be protected in accordance with the Bureau of Land Management's Interim Management Policies."


060-803
060-819
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EFERRED
NPS WILDERNESS
Carlsbad Caverns
Whites City
T.24S.
T.25S.
R.24 E.
R.25 E.
To El Paso, Tex.
BLACK

appendix

DEFINITIONS

Terminology specific to the BLM Wilderness Review Process has evolved throughout the inventory process. To facilitate better communication, the following terms elaborate on definitions already given in the Wilderness Inventory Handbook:

Cherry stemming: An unofficial term used to describe the way an inventory unit boundary is drawn to exclude a road that enters the unit; the resulting boundary resembles a cherry stem.

Contiguous Lands: Lands or legal subdivisions having a common boundary. Lands having only a common corner are not contiguous.

FLPMA: Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976, which mandated the BLM Wilderness Review. Often referred to and pronounced "FLIPMA."

Initial Inventory: The first step in the BLM Wilderness Review Process. Inventory units or roadless areas which are obviously unsuitable for wilderness are separated from those which warrant intensive inventory for wilderness characteristics.

Instant Study Areas: Section 603 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act mandated that all primitive or natural areas formally identified prior to November 1, 1975, will be studied for wilderness suitability and recommended to the President by July 1, 1980. There are three such areas in New Mexico.

Intensive Inventory: The second major step in the BLM Wilderness Review Process. Roadless areas are carefully inventoried for wilderness characteristics. The result of the intensive inventory is the identification of wilderness study areas.

Inventory Unit: Areas or islands of public lands indexed for easy reference at the start of the wilderness inventory. These units may or may not be roadless. A roadless determination requires more detailed fieldwork.

Public Lands: Any land and interest in land owned by the United States and administered by the Secretary of the Interior through the Bureau of Land Management, without regard to how the United States acquired ownership, except:

-- lands located on the Outer Continental Shelf

-- lands held for the benefit of Indians, Aleuts, and Eskimos

-- lands in which the United States retains the minerals, but surface is private.

RARE II: The wilderness inventory on lands administered by the Secretary of Agriculture through the United States Forest Service. The acronym stands for Roadless Area Review and Evaluation, and the "II" signifies that it is the second time the Forest Service has inventoried and evaluated the lands it administers.

Road: For the purposes of the BLM's wilderness inventory, the following definition has been adopted from the legislative history of FLPMA: "The work 'roadless' refers to the absence of roads which have been improved and maintained by mechanical means to ensure relatively regular and continous use. A way maintained solely by the passage of vehicles does not constitute a road."

To clarify this definition, the following subdefinitions also apply:

"Improved and maintained" - Actions taken physically by man to keep to road open to vehicular traffic. "Improved" does not necessarily mean formal construction. "Maintained" does not necessarily mean annual maintenance.

"Mechanical means" - Use of hand or power machinery or tools.

"Relatively regular and continous use" - Vehicular use which has occurred and will continue to occur on a relatively regular basis. Examples are: access roads for equipment to maintain a stock water tank or other established water sources; access roads to maintained recreation sites or facilities, or access roads to mining claims.

Roadless: Refers to the absence of roads which have been improved and maintained by mechanical means to ensure relatively regular and continuous use. A way maintained solely by the passage of vehicles does not constitute a road.

Roadless Area: That area which is roadless, as defined above, and is bounded by a road, the edge of a right-of-way, other landownership, or a significant imprint of man.

Situation Evaluation: Each wilderness inventory unit, whether roadless or not, has a situation evaluation written for it, describing the roads, size, and general naturalness of the area. These are the file documents associated with the initial inventory and are available at the district and state BLM offices.

Solitude: Outstanding opportunities for solitude or primitive and unconfined recreation are wilderness characteristics examined in the intensive wilderness inventory. Factors contributing to opportunities for solitude are vegetative screening, topographic relief, vistas and physiographic variety.

Supplemental Values: Features of ecological, geological, or other scientific, educational, scenic, or historical value that may be present in an inventory unit. These are not necessary criteria for wilderness suitability, as is stated in the Wilderness Act of 1964, but must be assessed during the intensive wilderness inventory.

Way: A two-wheel track created only the passage of vehicles. A "way" is not a road.

Wilderness: The definition contained in Section 2(c) of the Wilderness Act of 1964 is as follows: "A wilderness, in contrast with those areas where man and his own works dominate the landscape, is hereby recognized as an area where the earth and its community of life are untrammeled by man, where man himself is a visitor who does not remain. Wilderness is an area of undeveloped federal land retaining its primeval character and influence, without permanent improvements or human habitation, which is protected and managed so as to preserve its natural conditions and which (1) generally appears to have been affected primarily by the forces of nature, with the imprint of man's work substantially unnoticeable; (2) has outstanding opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation; (3) has at least 5,000 acres of land or is of sufficient size as to make practicable its preservation and use in an unimpaired condition; and (4) may also contain ecological, geological, or other features or scientific, educational, scenic, or historical value.

Wilderness Area: An area formally designated by Congress as part of the National Wilderness Preservation System.

Wilderness Characteristics: Those characteristics of wilderness as described in Section 2(c) of the Wilderness Act. These include size, naturalness, solitude, primitive and unconfined type of recreation, and supplemental values.

Wilderness Inventory: An evaluation of the public lands in the form of a written description and a map showing those lands that meet the wilderness criteria as established under Section 603(a) of FLPMA and Section 2(c) of the Wilderness Act. The lands meeting the criteria will be referred to as Wilderness Study Areas (WSA's). Those lands identified as not meeting wilderness criteria will be released from further wilderness consideration.

Wilderness Review: The term used to cover the entire wilderness inventory, study and reporting phases of the wilderness program of the BLM.

Wilderness Study: The process of analyzing and planning wilderness preservation opportunities along with other resource opportunities within the BLM's planning system.

APPENDIX B: COUNTY SUMMARY TABLES

SUMMARY TABLE III

DESIGNATED WILDERNESS STUDY AREAS BY COUNTY

These figures reflect present proposed acreages and include both entire units and BLM lands contiguous with roadless areas administered by other agencies.

County	BLM District	Name	Number	Acreage
McKinley	Albuquerque	Ignacio Chavez	NM-010-20	23,928
Torrance	Albuquerque	Manzano	NM-010-92	845
Sandoval	Albuquerque	Ignacio Chavez	NM-010-20	8,320
	Albuquerque	Chamisa	NM-010-21	11,091
	Albuquerque	Cabezon	NM-010-22	7,235
	Albuquerque	Empedrado	NM-010-63	8,419
	Albuquerque	La Lena	NM-010-63A	9,359
	Albuquerque	Ojito	NM-010-24	11,200*
				55,624
San Miguel	Albuquerque	Sabinosa	NM-010-55	15,760
Rio Arriba	Albuquerque	Navajo Peak	NM-010-59	7,750
	Albuquerque	San Antonio-west	NM-010-35	7,050*
				14,800
Eddy	Roswell	Mudgetts	NM-060-819	2,728
	Roswell	Mudgetts	NM-060-819A	213
				2,941
Lincoln	Roswell	Little Black Peak	NM-060-109	15,570
	Roswell	Corrizozo Lava Flow	NM-060-110A	11,000*
				26,570

*These are units which have undergone significant boundary adjustments due to a lack of wilderness characteristics.

APPENDIX B: COUNTY SUMMARY TABLES

SUMMARY TABLE III

PROPOSED OR DESIGNATED WILDERNESS STUDY AREAS BY COUNTY

County	BLM District	Name	Number	Acreage
Dona Ana	Las Cruces	West Potrillo Mountains	NM-030-052A	133,920*
	Las Cruces	Mount Riley	NM-030-052C	7,400
	Las Cruces	Aden Lava Flow	NM-030-053	24,725
	Las Cruces	Robledo Mountains	NM-030-063	11,640
	Las Cruces	Las Uvas Mountains	NM-030-065	10,680
	Las Cruces	Organ Mountains (Mine House Springs)	NM-030-074	7,200*
				195,565
Grant	Las Cruces	Gila Box	NM-030-023	688*
	Las Cruces	Blue Creek	NM-030-026	2,530
				3,218
Hidalgo	Las Cruces	Cowboy Spring	NM-030-007	6,710
	Las Cruces	Gila Box	NM-030-023	7,292
	Las Cruces	Blue Creek	NM-030-026	11,054
	Las Cruces	Big Hatchet Mountains	NM-030-035	65,920*
	Las Cruces	Alamo Hueco Mountains	NM-030-038	20,840
				111,846
Luna	Las Cruces	Cooke Range	NM-030-031	19,870*
	Las Cruces	Cedar Mountains	NM-030-042	16,680*
	Las Cruces	West Potrillo Mountains	NM-030-052A	9,225*
				45,775
Otero	Las Cruces	Sacramento Escarpment	NM-030-104	3,510*
	Las Cruces	Brokeoff Mountains	NM-030-112	28,600*
	Las Cruces	Guadalupe Escarpment	NM-030-114	7,053*
	Las Cruces	Culp Canyon	NM-030-152	10,937
				50,100

*These are units which have undergone significant boundary adjustments due to a lack of wilderness characteristics.

APPENDIX B: COUNTY SUMMARY TABLES

SUMMARY TABLE III

PROPOSED OR DESIGNATED WILDERNESS STUDY AREAS BY COUNTY

County	BLM District	Name	Number	Acreage
Sierra	Las Cruces	Jornada Lava Flow	NM-030-081	3,659*
Valencia	Socorro	Rimrock (Cebolla Canyon)	NM-020-007	29,430
	Socorro	Sand Canyon	NM-020-008	8,320
	Socorro	Little Rimrock	NM-020-009	9,540
	Socorro	Pinon	NM-020-010	13,160
	Socorro	Petaca Pinta	NM-020-014	12,440*
				72,890
Catron	Socorro	Mesita Blanca	NM-020-018	19,400*
	Socorro	Eagle Peak	NM-020-019	43,520*
	Socorro	Horse Mountain	NM-020-043	5,140
	Socorro	Continental Divide (Pelona Divide)	NM-020-044/ 45	70,000
				138,060
Socorro	Socorro	Sierra Ladrones	NM-020-016	38,922
	Socorro	Verantio	NM-020-035	7,450
	Socorro	Las Canas	NM-020-038	11,000
	Socorro	Stallion	NM-020-040	22,000*
	Socorro	Devil's Backbone	NM-020-047A	8,820
	Socorro	Devil's Reach	NM-020 047B	860
	Socorro	Jornada del Muerto	NM-020-055	25,260
				114,312

*These are units which have undergone significant boundary adjustments due to a lack of wilderness characteristics.

APPENDIX B: COUNTY SUMMARY TABLES

SUMMARY TABLE III

DESIGNATED WILDERNESS STUDY AREAS BY COUNTY

Designated Wilderness Study Areas

County	BLM District	Name	Number	Acreage
San Juan	Albuquerque	Bisti	NM-010-057	3,520
	Albuquerque	Denazin	NM-010-004	19,000*
	Albuquerque	Ah-she-sle-pah	NM-010-009	6,000
				28,520

Designated Instant Study Areas

County	BLM District	Name	Acreage
Chaves	Roswell	Mathers	360
Hidalgo	Las Cruces	Guadalupe Canyon	4,146
Valencia	Socorro	El Malpais	115,000
			119,506

*These are units which have undergone significant boundary adjustments due to a lack of wilderness characteristics.

APPENDIX B: COUNTY SUMMARY TABLES

SUMMARY TABLE IV

UNITS IN WHICH A WILDERNESS STUDY AREA RECOMMENDATION IS BEING DEFERRED BY COUNTY

County	BLM District	Name	Number	Acreage
Socorro	Socorro	Magdalena	NM-020-048A	3,640
	Socorro	Magdalena	NM-020-048B	320
	Socorro	Magdalena	NM-020-048C	400
				4,360
Eddy	Roswell	Devil's Den	NM-060-145	320
	Roswell	McKittrick Canyon	NM-060-146	200
	Roswell	Lonesome Ridge	NM-060-801	2,443
	Roswell	Letchuguillo Canyon	NM-060-803	1,167
	Roswell	Fawn Valley	NM-060-820	700
				4,830

APPENDIX C: FEDERAL LAWS

FEDERAL LAWS DIRECTING THE BLM WILDERNESS REVIEW

There are two laws directing the BLM's Wilderness Review Program: the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 and the Wilderness Act of 1964.

The Federal Land Policy and Management Act directs the BLM to review all roadless areas of 5,000 acres or more for wilderness values and report, through the Secretary and the President, its recommendations to Congress. During this review, the BLM is directed to manage these areas so that wilderness values are not impaired. The exact Congressional wording is quoted below:

> *"Sec. 603.(a) Within fifteen years after the date of approval of this Act, the Secretary shall review those roadless areas of five thousand acres or more and roadless islands of the public lands, identified during the inventory required by Section 201(a) of this Act as having wilderness characteristics described in the Wilderness Act of September 3, 1964 . . . and shall from time to time report to the President his recommendation as to the suitability or nonsuitability of each such area or island for preservation as wilderness: Provided, That prior to any recommendations for the designation of an area as wilderness the Secretary shall cause mineral surveys to be conducted by the Geological Survey and the Bureau of Mines to determine the mineral values, if any, that may be present in such areas . . . .*
>
> *(c) During the period of review of such areas and until Congress has determined otherwise, the Secretary shall continue to manage such lands according to his authority under this Act and other applicable law in a manner so as not to impair the suitability of such areas for preservation as wilderness, subject, however, to the continuation of existing mining and grazing uses and mineral leasing in the manner and degree in which the same was being conducted on the date of approval of this Act: Provided, That in managing the public lands the Secretary shall by regulation or otherwise take any action required to prevent unnecessary or undue degradation of the lands and their resources or to afford environmental protection."*

APPENDIX C: FEDERAL LAWS

The Wilderness Act of 1964 outlined Congress' policy concerning what a wilderness is. The BLM will be reviewing the public lands to see if these values do or do not exist. Congress' exact wording follows:

"Sec. 2.

(c) A wilderness, in contrast with those areas where man and his works dominate the landscape, is hereby recognized as an area where the earth and its community of life are untrammeled by man, where man himself is a visitor who does not remain. An area of wilderness is further defined to mean in this Act an area of undeveloped Federal land retaining its primeval character and influence, without permanent improvements or human habitation, which is protected and managed so as to preserve its natural conditions and which (1) generally appears to have been affected primarily by the forces of nature, with the imprint of man's work substantially unnoticeable; (2) has outstanding opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation; (3) has at least five thousand acres of land or is of sufficient size as to make practical its preservation and use in an unimpaired condition; and (4) may also contain ecological, geological or other features of scientific, educational, scenic, or historical values."

These two laws, and these provisions in particular, are the basis for the BLM's wilderness program.

APPENDIX D: OVERVIEW OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

The purpose of the public comment analysis was to objectively identify and display the nature and extent of the public input received which discussed the BLM's WSA proposals. A comprehensive analysis was conducted which resulted in a report entitled "Summary of Public Comments on the New Mexico State Director's Wilderness Study Area Recommendations." This document is available upon request through the BLM New Mexico State Office in Santa Fe. The analysis did not evaluate the value or importance of the comments received. These judgments were made by the district managers and the State Director and are reflected in the decision rationale which was developed for each wilderness inventory unit which was intensively inventoried. These decision rationales are available at the various BLM district offices.

The method used to analyze public comments was a content analysis system using Codinvolve techniques. This system is specifically designed to provide an objective display of the nature and extent of the contents of numerous and diverse public inputs.

The basic concept of this system is that the common denominators of virtually all public input are opinions offered for, against or about the issues in question along with the reasons that may be given to support the opinion. The number and kinds of supporting reasons can vary considerably even when those given support the same opinion.

This analysis system coded many variables such as form of input, residence of the respondent, number of inputs, number of signatures, etc. This information was placed on edge punch cards which make the data easily retrievable. This information is also retrievable in combinations. For example, how many inputs from Catron County objected to the concept of wilderness in general? What was the residence of the people who commented on Unit #020-006? How many personal letters made comments on specific units?

Approximately 3,696 inputs were received during the public comment period. Over 2,300 of those were coupons distributed throughout the nation by the Sierra Club and Friends of the Earth which, for New Mexico, forced wilderness study for 78 (or 79) areas containing 1,661,816 acres. A group of conservationists from El Paso distributed approximately 100 form letters which proposed wilderness study status for 43 areas and 773,000 acres in the Las Cruces District. Approximately 650 form letters opposing wilderness study status for the Aden Lava Flow and West Potrillo Mountains were received. About 500 personal letters were also received and 67 individuals testified at the ten public meetings. In addition, 17 reports with very detailed comments and 11 petitions were received. Several conversations were recorded and numerous BLM and Range Improvement Task Force comment forms were received.

Individuals and family groups were responsible for the bulk of the comments. In addition, 26 informal groups and 56 formal organizations authored inputs. Comments were also provided by 37 corporations and 20 government officials.

Approximately 2,828 comments were received from out-of-state (401 from Texas and Arizona). Of the 868 comments originating from in-state, over half originated from Bernalillo and Dona Ana Counties.

Approximately 200 inputs commented on the concept of wilderness in general. Several individuals favoring wilderness stated "wild lands belong to all Americans and should be protected from exploration" or "wilderness should be preserved for ourselves and future generations." Numerous comments opposed wilderness because "wilderness will prevent development of energy and mineral resources" or "wilderness will deny access to the elderly, handicapped and rock hounds." One individual stated that "wilderness areas are a step not into the future, but a step into the past." Several inputs gave conditional support to the concept of wilderness while several others provided general comments such as "please do all you can to prevent New Mexico from becoming another New Jersey" and "the Wilderness Society gets a little carried away."

Numerous inputs commented on the BLM's Wilderness Inventory results and on methods used to involve the public during the Intensive Wilderness Inventory. These comments vary greatly and are too numerous to be summarized in this overview.

The following summary reveals the opinions expressed on the ten most frequently discussed units. Inputs were classified as either personal inputs favoring or opposing wilderness study or form letters and petitions favoring or opposing wilderness study.

The purpose of this summary is to display which inventory units generated the greatest response from the public. Decisions were not based on the total number of inputs and/or signatures favoring or opposing wilderness study. Instead, the BLM was more concerned with the quality of the inputs and their usefulness in evaluating area's wilderness characteristics.

Note: The numbers under "I" represent the number of inputs. The numbers under "S" are the number of signatures.

Ten Most Discussed Units

	Personal Inputs Favoring WSA		Personal Inputs Opposing WSA		Form Letters and Petitions Favoring WSA		Form Letters and Petitions Opposing WSA	
	I	S	I	S	I	S	I	S
NM-030-034 Florida Mountains	43	58	39	41	2620	3370	-	-

Personal inputs favoring wilderness study supported this unit primarily because of its supplemental values and outstanding opportunities for solitude and primitive types of recreation; several failed to provide any supporting reasons. Several inputs opposed wilderness study status due to lack of apparent naturalness resulting from past mining activities and due to potential conflicts with future mining and grazing.

	Personal Inputs Favoring WSA		Personal Inputs Opposing WSA		Form Letters and Petitions Favoring WSA		Form Letters and Petitions Opposing WSA	
	I	S	I	S	I	S	I	S
NM-030-031 Cooke's Range	34	33	37	37	2620	3370	-	-

Personal inputs favoring wilderness study for this unit supported it primarily because of its supplemental values and outstanding opportunities for solitude and primitive types of recreation. Almost half of those opposing wilderness study cited resource conflicts and several others discussed impacts resulting from rangeland management activities. Several individuals of both persuasions failed to provide supporting reasons for their opinions.

Table 9 continued

	Personal Inputs Favoring WSA		Personal Inputs Opposing WSA		Form Letters and Petitions Favoring WSA		Form Letters and Petitions Opposing WSA	
	I	S	I	S	I	S	I	S
NM-030-053 Aden Lava Flow	22	23	28	25	2620	3670	654	903

Half of the personal inputs favoring wilderness study did not provide any supporting reasons. The remainder discussed the unit's outstanding opportunities for solitude and primitive types of recreation. Resource conflicts were cited most often by those opposing wilderness study; several inputs did not provide supporting reasons.

	Personal Inputs Favoring WSA		Personal Inputs Opposing WSA		Form Letters and Petitions Favoring WSA		Form Letters and Petitions Opposing WSA	
	I	S	I	S	I	S	I	S
NM-030-035 Big Hatchet Mountains	33	31	13	13	2620	3370	-	-

Personal inputs favoring wilderness study supported this unit primarily because of its supplemental values and outstanding opportunities for solitude and primitive types of recreation. Inputs opposing wilderness study dealt primarily with resource conflicts and impacts resulting from mining and rangeland management activities.

Table 9 Continued

	Personal Inputs Favoring WSA		Personal Inputs Opposing WSA		Form Letters and Petitions Favoring WSA		Form Letters and Petitions Opposing WSA	
	I	S	I	S	I	S	I	S
NM-030-052 West Potrillo Mountains	31	31	31	29	2620	3370	654	903

Personal inputs supported wilderness study for this unit primarily because of its supplemental values and outstanding opportunities for solitude and primitive types of recreation. Half of those personal inputs opposing wilderness study cited resource conflicts as their principle reason. Several others did not provide and supporting reasons for their opinions.

	Personal Inputs Favoring WSA		Personal Inputs Opposing WSA		Form Letters and Petitions Favoring WSA		Form Letters and Petitions Opposing WSA	
	I	S	I	S	I	S	I	S
NM-020-038 Las Canas	30	46	24	30	2525	3724	1	185

Most of the personal inputs favoring wilderness study supported this unit because of its natural appearance and its outstanding opportunities for solitude and primitive types of recreation. Individuals opposing wilderness study argued that the area is severely impacted by range improvements and lacks both supplemental values and outstanding opportunities for solitude and primitive types of recreation.

Table 9 Continued

	Personal Inputs Favoring WSA		Personal Inputs Opposing WSA		Form Letters and Petitions Favoring WSA		Form Letters and Petitions Opposing WSA	
	I	S	I	S	I	S	I	S
NM-030-042 Cedar Mountains	11	12	31	31	2619	2755	-	-

Most of the personal inputs favoring wilderness study status stated that the unit offers outstanding opportunities for solitude and primitive types of recreation. Inputs opposing wilderness study primarily cited resource conflicts and impacts resulting from rangeland management activities. Four inputs requested a reinventory of the unit.

	Personal Inputs Favoring WSA		Personal Inputs Opposing WSA		Form Letters and Petitions Favoring WSA		Form Letters and Petitions Opposing WSA	
	I	S	I	S	I	S	I	S
NM-030-023 Gila Box	34	35	5	5	2620	3370	-	-

Personal inputs favoring wilderness study status supported this unit primarily because of its outstanding opportunities for solitude and primitive types of recreation and its unique supplemental values. Individuals opposing wilderness study offered a variety of supporting reasons, but no one reason was dominant.

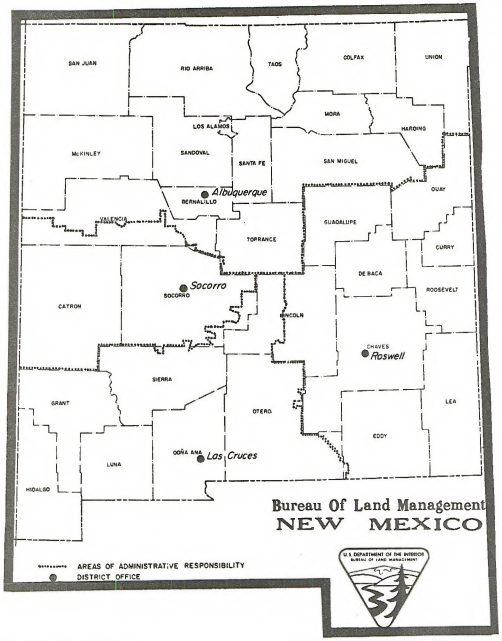
Table 9 Continued

	Personal Inputs Favoring WSA		Personal Inputs Opposing WSA		Form Letters and Petitions Favoring WSA		Form Letters and Petitions Opposing WSA	
	I	S	I	S	I	S	I	S
NM-020-016 Sierra Ladrones	33	31	4	4	2525	3274	-	-

Most of the personal inputs favoring wilderness study status stated that the area appears to be natural, offers outstanding opportunities for solitude and primitive types of recreation and contains supplemental values; several failed to provide supporting reasons, but no one reason was dominant.

	Personal Inputs Favoring WSA		Personal Inputs Opposing WSA		Form Letters and Petitions Favoring WSA		Form Letters and Petitions Opposing WSA	
	I	S	I	S	I	S	I	S
NM-020-044/45 Continental Divide	30	46	6	6	2525	3274	1	398

Most of the personal inputs favoring wilderness study status stated that the unit appears to be natural, offers outstanding opportunities for solitude and primitive recreation and contains supplemental values; several failed to provide supporting reasons. Most of those opposing wilderness study discussed impacts resulting from rangeland management activities.



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